



Performance contributes to future

The continuing improvement of Aberdeen Harbour has been re-enforced by record profits in 2006. As a Trust Port, the Harbour Board reinvest all profits in development and maintenance as part of a strategy to sustain and increase traffic.

Due mainly to increased traffic and a reduction in costs, pre-tax profits reached £9.03 million (2005 - £5.6 million). Turnover passed £20 million for the first time, at £20.09 million (2005 - £19.6 million), in 2006 when port charges were held for the seventh time in eight years.

Harbour Board Chairman, David Paton OBE, commented: *"The results reflect the successful and efficient operation of the harbour at a time of record activity by port users. The strong performance re-enforces our commitment to further expansion of facilities and traffic."*

More than £6.4 million was invested in development and maintenance by the Board in 2006, and a number of projects are at the study and planning stages, with the aim of further increasing capacity to handle additional traffic.

The Board have a development and maintenance budget of more than £40 million for the period 2007-2011.

Cargo and shipping records

The tonnage of cargo handled in 2006 passed five million tonnes for the first time and the volume of shipping again set a new record.

Imports and exports totalled 5.11 million tonnes (2005 - 4.85 million tonnes). Shipping reached a new high for the eighth year in succession at 23.46 million gross tonnes (2005 - 21.67 million gross tonnes), reflecting the larger vessels using the port and increased vessels at 8,433 (2005 - 8,335).

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, commented: *"With strong performances across most sectors, the figures highlight the port's major contribution to the economy and its ability to handle increasing traffic. A busy start to 2007 provides further encouragement."*

Higher levels of activity offshore were a feature of oil-related traffic, while the wide range of general cargo shipped was also up.

Continuing growth in oil-related shipments to West Africa, rising exports of scrap metal and the introduction of timber exports all contributed, as did increased imports of calcium carbonate slurry, barites and steel tubulars. Fish landings at the market declined.

Passenger traffic saw a slight increase to a record 141,154, mostly on the roll-on/roll-off ferries serving Orkney and Shetland and the remainder onboard the nine visiting cruise ships.

Appointments

At their January meeting, members of Aberdeen Harbour Board re-elected David Paton OBE as Chairman and Keith Allan as Vice Chairman for 2007.

Channel widening study

A study is underway to evaluate the benefits, cost and technical requirements of widening and deepening the port's main channel to provide improved passage for larger vessels.

The project should also provide a greater window for shipping movements when weather occasionally creates a swell at the entrance.

The Board's Engineering Director, Ken Reilly, said: *"The creation of around 20 deep-water berths at the port has already made a very significant contribution to attracting larger vessels and achieving record activity."*

"The logical follow-through is to examine the potential to improve the navigation channel to accommodate the bigger ships expected to operate in the future. Widening the channel and deepening the entrance would be a major project, calling for significant investment."

A programme of test bores has been undertaken as part of the comprehensive study, with initial findings expected to be available in the spring for consideration.

New era for Safety Group

The Port Safety Liaison Group at Aberdeen Harbour has moved into a new era with the appointment of Derek Johnstone, HSEQ Manager with SBS Logistics, as Chairman in succession to Jamie Christie, the Harbour Board's Assistant Engineering Director. Gillian Henderson, BP's Logistics HSE Adviser, is the Vice-Chair.

The group was formed in 2004 in response to the industry's Safer Ports Initiative which set reduction targets for both fatal and HSE reportable accidents and has played a key part in achieving these.

Jamie Christie commented: *"When the Group was formed, the plan was for Aberdeen Harbour to facilitate its growth and to drive it forward initially. The point has been reached where members are taking it to the next stage. The Board remain supportive and will continue to promote the Group's important contribution to safety within the port community."*

The Group is evaluating strategy and looking forward to the launch of Safer Ports Initiative Part 2.

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Transport links emphasised

While generally supporting the North East Scotland Transport Partnership's consultation document and recognising detailed projects will likely emerge, Aberdeen Harbour Board would have "preferred to see the document being more proactive, rather than merely supportive of ongoing projects."

The Board would also have welcomed more specific transport schemes being promoted and discussed in greater detail.

In their submission, the Board state: "It is our intention to continue to grow the port's customer base and further promote short sea shipping as both a viable alternative and complementary to transporting freight by road and rail."

Other points made include:

- A key factor in the port's continued success will be provision and protection of good road and rail links. Measures to improve transport connections and interchange opportunities within city and region, and better connectivity between ferry, rail and bus passengers, are welcomed.
- Agreeing that transport policies and land use planning are inextricably linked, the Board would be supportive of policies to secure land adjacent to key transport nodes to allow these to grow and develop.
- With established socio-economic links between the region and Orkney and Shetland, the Board are seeking stronger Nestrans support for Aberdeen as the mainland port for lifeline ferry services.
- Rapid and efficient freight movements between the region's main business centres and key transport nodes are critical to sustainable economic growth. The Board support priority for heavy goods vehicles on roads and ask that all options be considered, including the trialling of "non-car lanes" or freight vehicle access to bus lanes on arterial roads.

Larger ship on Streamline service

For the second time in six months, Streamline Shipping Group has increased the size of vessel it operates on a twice-weekly load-on/load-off cargo service between Aberdeen and Orkney and Shetland.

The *Daroja*, which has been chartered to replace the *Fehn Mistral*, began sailing on the route in February.

The Group's Operations Director, Phil Bremner, commented: "We've introduced the *Daroja* in response to demand – she's newer, faster and bigger, and is able to carry up to 290 containers, compared to the 205 capacity on her predecessor."

Award for John Lawrie Group

The successful use of Aberdeen Harbour for the export of scrap metal has contributed to recognition for Aberdeen-based recycling company, John Lawrie Group, which has received a Queen's Award for Enterprise in recognition of achievements in international trade.

Annual shipments through the port have doubled since the first in 2003 and total around 200,000 tonnes over the period, with cargoes sent to Spain, Portugal, Italy, France and Belgium.

Brian Meldrum, Lawrie's Chairman, said: "With a £2 million investment in new processing equipment taking place at our Aberdeen facility, we expect to see a substantial increase in shipments through the port from later this year."

As well as four UK locations, Lawrie operates in Spain, Sweden, USA, Abu Dhabi and China.

Board speaker

Assistant Engineering Director at Aberdeen Harbour, Jamie Christie, recently delivered a keynote address at a symposium in Australia dedicated to microbiologically influenced corrosion.

He was the only UK speaker in the international line-up in Perth where his contribution, based on many years of working knowledge, related to Accelerated Low Water Corrosion (ALWC), affecting steel maritime structures in ports and harbours.

Causing rapid deterioration of unprotected berth structures and considerable unexpected expense, it has been estimated that ALWC could cost UK industry in excess of £250 million over the coming years. The Harbour Board are recognised for successfully managing ALWC within the port.

An international port

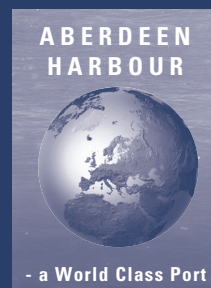
Aberdeen Harbour's role as an international port continued to develop last year when there were shipping links with an increased number of countries, including:

Algeria; Angola; Argentina; Australia; Belgium; Canada; China; Cyprus; Denmark; Egypt; Eire; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Italy; Ivory Coast; Lebanon; Malta; Mexico; Morocco; Netherlands; Nigeria; Norway; Philippines; Poland; Portugal; Russia; Singapore; Spain; Sweden; Trinidad; Tunisia; Turkey and USA.

Wish you were here?

An aerial view of the port, including the Marine Operations Centre commissioned last year, features on a new postcard produced by the Harbour Board and distributed for use by various organisations servicing the travel and tourism industry.

The photograph of the port, with the city in the background, has also been reproduced on the Board's latest wall poster.



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