



MAIN CHARGES UNCHANGED AGAIN

The coming year will again see main charges on shipping and cargo at Aberdeen Harbour held as part of the Board's strategy to sustain and attract traffic through the port's continuing competitiveness.

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, said: "Another very busy year in 2007, combined with a positive outlook for 2008 and the Board's strong financial position following a period of record traffic, enables us to hold the main charges yet again. At the same time, we are continuing to invest in the future and have a number of major projects underway or at the planning stage."

It will be the ninth time in 10 years that there has been no increase in the charges which have risen by only 17% since the early 1980s, against a 153% increase in inflation in the same period.

As a Trust Port, the Board reinvest all profits in improving and expanding the facilities offered at the port and have approved a capital budget of around £57 million for the next five years.

A recent independent study revealed that activity at Aberdeen Harbour contributes £420 million per annum into the local economy, helping to sustain up to 11,000 full-time equivalent jobs.

Progressing South Side proposal

A feasibility study into the redevelopment of the port's South Side, to provide modern facilities for larger vessels now using the River Dee, is at an advanced stage. The process also requires an environmental impact study, planning permission and final approval by the Board.

Bringing further increases in efficiency, cost effectiveness and safety of operations, the project will deliver significant benefits to port users and to the Board in the management of the harbour.

It is expected to require the largest single investment in the port's modern era, exceeding the combined costs of more than £20 million for the construction of Telford Dock and the redevelopment of Matthews Quay.

It is envisaged that the scheme will involve reconstruction and realignment of ageing quays along 540 metres of the south side to provide six new, deepwater berths, with River Dee Dock filled in to form an extensive back-up area to support shipping operations.

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, explained: "Several of the quays are around a century old and need replacement. They are also too short to easily accommodate modern wider and deeper vessels. The quays also require strengthening for use by the latest cranes. The new layout will also accommodate greater flexibility and safety in vessel movements."

"As a location for marshalling and storage of cargoes, the back-up area will improve the efficiency of operation and facilitate more cost-saving sharing opportunities for port users."

It is hoped the phased work will start in 2008, with completion over three years.

Board appointments

Two new members of Aberdeen Harbour Board, along with a re-appointed member, will begin three-year terms of office on 1 January, 2008.

Retired Councillor Raymond Bisset, who served in local politics for 33 years, latterly as Provost of Aberdeenshire, and on the boards of numerous external organisations, and Stephane Mauduit, a former Master Mariner and Chief Engineer with worldwide shipping experience who joined Total E&P UK Limited in 2001 and is now its Logistics and Marine Manager for North Sea operations, are joining the Board.

Keith Allan, a Board member since 1991 and Vice Chairman since 1997, has been reappointed to the Board for a further term. He joined Shell International in 1965 and is a former Director of Technical Services with Shell Exploration & Production in Aberdeen. He currently serves on the boards of companies in the UK and USA.

Expanding sea-to-rail facilities

Inter modal transport facilities at the port are to be expanded, with additional sidings to handle the increasing freight arriving and leaving by rail. Two new sidings, each 300 metres long, are to be installed by the Harbour Board at Waterloo yard, at a cost of around £500,000.

Harbour Board Operations Director and Harbour Master, Captain Ray Shaw, said: "Increasing the use of rail transport to deliver shipments to-and-from the port as an efficient and environmentally-friendly alternative to road is a key objective of the Board. The recently completed gauge enhancement of the line to the central belt gives added opportunities for sea containers to be handled in Aberdeen."

"In addition to the current traffic increasing, there is strong interest in the offshore oil industry in using the facility and we are confident that the new sidings will be another valuable asset in sustaining and developing activity."

Scheduled to be operational next summer, the built-in sidings will be flush with the yard surface, enabling other traffic to drive over the tracks, so retaining full flexibility in the yard's use.

The yard's current two sidings linked to the UK network are used for the onward delivery, regionally and nationally, of imported slurry products for coatings for the paper industry, with throughput expected to continue to grow.

Season's greetings!

Aberdeen Harbour Board members, management and staff wish all readers of Quaynotes a Merry Christmas and prosperous 2008.

The Board's offices at 16 Regent Quay will be closed on 25 & 26 December and 1 & 2 January, with the port open as usual for shipping movements.

Wi-Fi for ships in port

A dedicated wireless internet network has been introduced for use by ships berthed at the port in a joint initiative by Aberdeen-based company, Dick Fleming Communications, which is providing the service, and the Harbour Board.

The subscription network offers faster and cheaper communications than the satellite systems traditionally used by vessels, with a broadband-speed system providing full support for browsing, email, instant messaging and telephone calls via the internet.

Dick Fleming Communications Director, Craig Forsyth, said: "We believe that Aberdeen Harbour is probably the first commercial port in the UK with a dedicated Wi-Fi network for ships, and we anticipate developing systems for other ports."

Another busy year

Cargo handled at Aberdeen Harbour in the first nine months of 2007 held steady at 3.8 million tonnes, while the tonnage of shipping increased again to 17.9 million tonnes, up from 17.7 million tonnes in the same period last year.

The tonnage of vessels reflected the continuing trend in larger ships using the port where the number of arrivals fell slightly to 6,372 (January-September 2006 – 6,422).

The wide range of cargoes saw imports of woodpulp increase by almost 40,000 tonnes to around 110,000 tonnes, while shipments of fishfeed to Orkney, Shetland and Norway showed healthy growth. With the number of shellfish vessels using the port up from 327 to 522, there was a substantial increase in landings to 1,654 tonnes.

Offshore oil and gas industry traffic included a continuing increase in the use of Aberdeen as a hub port for the export of equipment to destinations such as West Africa.

A busy final quarter has included a single week with bentonite arriving from Greece for the drilling industry and, for the paper industry, chalk from Denmark and pulp from the USA, Spain and Chile, while exports included paper products for Russia, timber for Sweden and oilfield equipment for India and West Africa.

Logs for Latvia

The continuing growth in timber exports to Europe has seen Latvia added to the list of destinations, with a shipment of around 2,500 tonnes to the Baltic port of Riga.

"The increase in exporters, destinations and tonnage of timber over the past 18 months is very encouraging and another example of successful diversification of traffic at the port," commented the Harbour Board's Assistant Harbour Master, Captain Brian Andrew

EnShip was the local agent for the latest consignment of timber, which was sold through Scottish Woodlands.

The forestry industry introduced shipments from Aberdeen in May, 2006 and, with four sellers now using the port, cargoes have been sent to Finland, Norway and Sweden for production of woodpulp, and to Germany, The Netherlands and now Latvia for chipboard and similar products. Exports this year are expected to total around 35,000 tonnes.

New facility operational

The availability of a new facility has further expanded the port's capacity to handle increasing traffic, with the 20,000 square metres of surfaced back-up area at Point Law Peninsula, developed at a cost of £2.5 million, supporting operations at neighbouring quays.

The multi-user facility is being used principally by the offshore industry, for the marshalling and storage of a range of cargoes and equipment.

Harbour Engineering Director, Ken Reilly, commented: "The sustained level of traffic underlines the importance of the latest and future projects in providing room for more shipments by both current and future port users."

Creation of a further area, extending to 16,000 square metres at Waterloo Quay, at a cost of more than £4 million, is well underway and due to be operational next year.

"We're very encouraged by the fact that, during the recent successful trial, hundreds of people using their web browser detected the Aberdeen Harbour network, leading to our first customer signing up even before we went live."

The company has invested in the installation of nine Wi-Fi internet access points, with equipment on the Board's quayside lighting towers and in the Marine Operations Centre. The potential for expansion includes access for vessels anchored in Aberdeen Bay.

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, said: "The Wi-Fi access is in line with our policy of ensuring modern services for port users, and the timing is particularly appropriate, with the harbour attracting a high level of international activity, requiring berthed vessels to be in contact with offices around the world."

Saltire award for Centre

Aberdeen Harbour's Marine Operations Centre has been commended in the Project category of the Saltire Society's Civil Engineering Awards 2007, presented in association with The Institution of Civil Engineers.

The recognition is for the Project as a whole, taking into account various aspects of design and construction, with particular attention paid to their integration.

The certificate of Commendation was presented to the Harbour Board's Engineering Director, Ken Reilly, at an awards ceremony in Edinburgh. Also represented were the project's architects, SMC Parr; contractor, Sir Robert McAlpine, and Arch Henderson, Consulting Engineer.

The state-of-the-art Marine Operations Centre, operational since September, 2006, took top honours last year in the Aberdeen Civic Society's annual Awards.

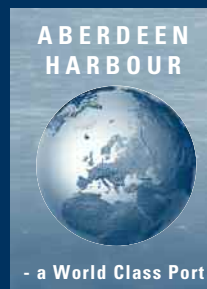
Strategic property acquisition

Aberdeen Harbour Board have acquired the long term leasehold investment in the Nord Centre.

The 8.25 acre facility on York Street adjacent to the busy port's Telford Dock was previously let to JPR Services Limited and accommodates a mix of modern industrial and office buildings occupied by oil-related and engineering companies, with a yard area serving multiple users.

Board Secretary, Ian Jessiman, said: "As a strategic acquisition, the investment brings not only rental income, but also provides future opportunities to support quayside operations for port users and other businesses requiring a harbour location. This is in line with the Board's strategy of providing room for the increasing levels of activity currently being handled at the port."

Chartered surveyors, J&E Shepherd, acted on behalf of the Harbour Board in the acquisition.



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