



ACTIVITY SUPPORTS INVESTMENT IN HARBOUR

The continuing redevelopment of Aberdeen Harbour has received another boost, with the port revealing healthy financial results for 2007 - annual turnover climbed to £20.9 million (2006 - £20.1 million) and pre-tax profit to £9.5 million (£9.03 million).

Aberdeen Harbour Board Chairman, David Paton, said: *"The continued growth in business last year underlines the port's role in the economy and the considerable potential for further development. The Board have approved a £57 million, five-year expenditure plan to ensure the harbour remains in the lead for modern facilities, efficient operations and cost effectiveness."*

Main charges for 2008 were held at the previous year's rates for the ninth time in 10 years. As a Trust Port, all profits are reinvested in the development and maintenance of the harbour where the Board have undertaken projects totalling over £200 million in recent decades.

"The high level of activity closely reflected the buoyant local economy, driven mainly by a strong oil price and the continued commitment of oil and gas operators to invest further in the North Sea and beyond," said Mr Paton.

The Board's ongoing programme of creating additional, modern fit-for-purpose facilities for users continued during 2007 and included initiating a feasibility study for the redevelopment of the berths on the south side of the River Dee.

Mr Paton commented: *"If delivered, the new layout would provide deeper berths, with stronger quays and safer navigation within the River Dee. Offshore support vessels could be fully serviced at one berth during their visit, thus reducing vessel movements and improving efficiency, cost effectiveness and safety."*

Record cargo and shipping

Continuing busy times at Aberdeen Harbour saw cargo and shipping handled reach a new high in 2007.

With freight passing 5 million tonnes for the first time in 2006, imports and exports last year added up to 5.13 million tonnes, compared with 5.11 million tonnes. Oil-related shipments, in support of industry operations in UK waters and elsewhere, was sustained at 2.34 million tonnes (2006 - 2.36 million tonnes). General cargo increased to 2.39 million tonnes (2.36 million tonnes), with growing exports of logs to Europe - first introduced in 2006 - among the contributors.

Shellfish landings increased by a third and landings of industrial fish increased slightly. Direct landings of white fish, however, reduced to almost a half of the total for 2006.

Shipping was a record for the ninth year in succession, at 24.02 million gross tonnes - up from 23.46 million gross tonnes. There was also a small rise to 8,481 in the number of vessels calling.

"The figures reflect yet another very busy year for port users across all the main sectors," commented Colin Parker, the Harbour Board's Chief Executive. *"The continuing level of performance is backed by recent, current and future Board projects, and main charges held in 2008. There has also been a strong start to 2008 and the outlook is very positive."*

Global gateway

From America to Africa and Asia, as well as numerous connections with Europe, Aberdeen's role as a global gateway was maintained last year, with trading links with around 35 countries. The main markets again featured, with some variations in the annual list which included:

Angola; Belgium; Cameroon; China; Congo; Denmark; Egypt; Equatorial Guinea; Finland; France; Gabon; Georgia; Ghana; Greece; India; Irish Republic; Ivory Coast; Japan; Libya; Malta; Mauritania; Mexico; Morocco; Netherlands; Nigeria; Norway; Poland; Portugal; Russia; Singapore; Spain; Sweden; Togo; Trinidad; Tunisia; and U.S.A.

Invitation to meet the Board

Port users and members of the public will have an opportunity to meet the Harbour Board in May and hear about the latest activity and development.

Harbour Board Chief Executive, Colin Parker, explained: *"The meeting will give an insight into what's happening and what's planned at the port and into its major contribution to the economy at time of record activity and further significant development, underway and in planning. It will also be a valuable opportunity to further develop our interface with the wider community."*

The meeting, in the Maritime Museum, Shiprow, from 5pm on Tuesday 20 May, will include a presentation and questions-and-answers session.

Details of how to register to attend will be advertised in April.

Chairman and Vice Chairman re-appointed

David Paton OBE and Keith Allan were re-appointed the Harbour Board's Chairman and Vice Chairman respectively for 2008 at the January meeting of Board members.

*Information on how to become a part-time, non executive member is now available on the Board's website which outlines criteria, the appointments process and how to notify interest meantime, ahead of vacancies being advertised in September.

Museum podcasts

Aberdeen Maritime Museum is now producing podcasts, in association with the Harbour Board, as an introduction to historic collections held in the city. The first in the ongoing series provides a tour of the Museum and the second deals with the history of the world-famous tea-clipper, *Thermopylae*, built in Aberdeen in 1868. For more information, access www.aberdeenships.com

Name for new launch

The port's new pilot launch is due for delivery in April and will be known as *Sea Haven* following a competition among staff members.

The name was suggested individually by secretaries, Margaret Innes and Pat Sim, Facilities Manager, Graeme Wood, and Ralph Greig, a Vessel Traffic Services Officer, all of whom received shopping vouchers as their prize.

The launch, *Sea Shepherd*, delivered in 2004, was also named following staff suggestions. The similar design 15.25 metre steel, twin screw *Sea Haven* has been built by Pembroke-based, Mustang

Marine (Wales) under a contract valued at almost £800,000. In addition to her pilotage and general purpose duties, the vessel is also designed for hydrographical surveys and VIP transport.

The *Sea Haven* will replace a vessel in service since 1987. Captain Ray Shaw, the Harbour Board's Operations Director and Harbour Master, commented: "With the port handling record activity and around 17,000 vessel arrivals and departures a year, the new launch will increase our ability to service further growth in traffic."

Harbour hat-trick!

Aberdeen Harbour's reputation as a showcase for new oil-related vessels has been highlighted with the naming of three ships in a single ceremony for the first time

The support vessels, *VOS Innovator* and *VOS Inspirer*, and the platform supply vessel, *Rig Express*, were built by Vroon Offshore Services as part of a multi-million £ fleet expansion programme for its worldwide operations, with Aberdeen as one of four bases.

Captain Ray Shaw, the Harbour Board's Director of Operations and Harbour Master, said: "We welcome this latest expansion of Vroon's fleet as another sign of confidence in the industry's future. While the port's role as the centre of activity for offshore industry marine support in the North Sea means it is regularly the location for the naming and introduction of new vessels, this is the first time that three have been named on the same occasion."

Aberdeen also has another showcase role – as a strategically-located hub port in the spot charter market for oil-related vessels.

*Last year, almost 5,700 ships serving the offshore oil and gas industry used the port.

Peterson acquiring SBS Logistics

The privately-owned, Peterson Offshore Group, a Dutch company specialising in logistics services, quality control and risk management in more than 50 countries, is increasing its 20% stake in Aberdeen-headquartered, SBS Logistics, to full ownership.

SBS is a major support base operator at Aberdeen Harbour as part of its UK-wide integrated offshore logistics services. Following the restructuring, it will trade as Peterson-SBS.

Safety Group initiatives

Membership of the The Port Safety Liaison Group has grown to represent 12 port users over the past year, during which initiatives included setting up a common data-base of all accidents within the harbour and formation of a workgroup dedicated to non-permanent employee safety.

Links with the Marine Safety and Safety Alert Data Information Exchange forums continue through members.

Chair for 2007, Derek Johnston of SBS, was due to hand over to Gillian Henderson of BP, but with both having moved position within their organisations and no longer involved, the chair is reverting to the Harbour Board pending the election of new officials. The interim measure will ensure communications between ports users on health and safety is maintained.

High value ports

The economic importance of Scotland's ports has been highlighted in a new evaluation which showed they handled 102 million tonnes of freight – worth £65 billion and 17% of the UK total – in 2006.

A greater proportion of freight per person passes through Scottish ports than anywhere else in the UK – including more than two-thirds of Scottish exports.

It is estimated that harbour-related activity generates around 18,000 full-time equivalent jobs and up to 21,000 indirectly.

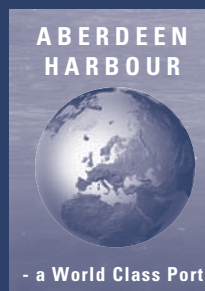
"Ports in Scotland – Delivering Value" was launched by the Scottish Ports Committee of the British Ports Association at a recent meeting with Stewart Stevenson, Scottish Minister for Transport. A copy will be available on the Harbour Board's website.

Busy passenger port again

Following a significant increase in passenger traffic in recent years, numbers held up well in 2007 when there was increased competition from subsidised air fares on the Orkney and Shetland routes and NorthLink's ferries, *Hjaltland* and *Hrossey*, were temporarily out-of-service for upgrading of accommodation capacity.

A total of 137,330 passengers used the port, virtually all of them sailing to-and-from the islands, with the remainder on cruise ships.

*An information board, incorporating an aerial photograph, has been erected by the Board outside the NorthLink terminal to help arriving passengers find the pedestrian route to the city centre.



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