

JUNE 2026 | DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY

# BUSINESS BULLETIN

## **The North-east needs to tell its story better**

Russell Borthwick says the region  
must do more to champion its  
diversifying economy

*Page 4*

## **Energy expertise becomes defence asset**

How the North-east's offshore  
expertise is becoming a vital  
defence asset

*Page 8*

## Cover Story: **Granite City established on global street art stage**

*Page 24*



**Aberdeen &  
Grampian  
Chamber of  
Commerce**

# CHAMBER TALK

MEET THE PEOPLE BEHIND SOME OF  
THE BIGGEST AND BEST-KNOWN  
BUSINESSES IN THE NORTH-EAST  
OF SCOTLAND.



SCAN HERE TO  
WATCH CHAMBERTALK

CONTACT [COMMERCIAL@AGCC.CO.UK](mailto:COMMERCIAL@AGCC.CO.UK) TO FIND OUT HOW YOU CAN  
GET INVOLVED WITH CHAMBERTALK

## Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

The Hub  
Exploration Drive  
Aberdeen Energy Park  
Bridge of Don  
Aberdeen  
AB23 8GX



T 01224 343900  
E info@agcc.co.uk  
www.agcc.co.uk

**Affiliated Chambers**  
Moray

### Bulletin Team



#### Editor

Ryan Crighton  
T 01224 343926  
E bulletin@agcc.co.uk



#### Advertising

Pauline Western  
T 01224 343919  
E pauline.western@agcc.co.uk



#### Design & production

Geri Mulvany  
T 01224 343934  
E production@agcc.co.uk



#### Journalist

Danny McKay  
T 01224 343939  
E danny.mckay@agcc.co.uk



#### Editorial

Rebecca Henderson  
T 01224 343907  
E rebecca.henderson@agcc.co.uk

**Not a member yet?**  
Come join our network!



# Contents

JUNE 2026

Focus on Diversifying Our Economy



28

**Diplomatic Advisory Hub: A new resource for exporters**



34

**Diversification key to resilient and balanced economy**



38

**Two KGMs put to the test in a Motor Mouth special**

## Regulars

PAGE |

### VIEWPOINT

Diversification is happening... but we need to tell our story better

4

### POLICY UPDATE

Ryan Crighton, AGCC

12

### RESEARCH - What market signals tell us about our region's next chapter

Samira Heshmatzadeh, AGCC

23

### ON THE MOVE

Who is going places in the region?

44

# Diversification is happening... but we need to tell our story better

**For decades, the North-east of Scotland has been defined by one word: energy. And rightly so.**

This region helped power the UK economy, built world-leading expertise, created hundreds of thousands of jobs and established Aberdeen as an internationally recognised city of innovation, engineering and ambition.

But if there is one thing True North and AGCC's recent "What the North East Thinks" research revealed, it is this: while diversification is happening, we still have a major job to do in convincing both ourselves - and the wider world - that our economy is broader, deeper and more dynamic than many people realise.

The survey findings were fascinating. Energy remains overwhelmingly associated with our regional economy, with nearly three-quarters of respondents selecting it as the sector they most associate with Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. That is no surprise. Energy is part of our identity and will remain central to our future prosperity for decades to come.

Look beyond that headline, however, and a more nuanced picture emerges. There is growing confidence in sectors such as tourism and hospitality, food and drink, digital technology and life sciences. Support for major new projects like the proposed Blackdog Green Data Centre and Industrial Park is strong. And perhaps most importantly, the public overwhelmingly rejected the false choice between oil and gas or renewables. People here understand that our future lies in both.

That matters because diversification in the North-east has never been about abandoning our industrial strengths. It has always been about building on them. Our world-class energy expertise created supply chains, entrepreneurial talent, engineering capability and global connections that can - and already do - translate into new sectors and opportunities.

You can already see that evolution taking place across the region. Companies born in oil and gas are now delivering solutions in offshore wind, hydrogen, carbon capture, digital infrastructure and defence. Our food and drink sector is a global success story. The region's tech ecosystem continues to grow at pace, while life sciences and precision medicine are gaining traction. Tourism, too, is evolving rapidly, fuelled by significant investment in hospitality and attractions.

Yet despite all of this progress, awareness remains remarkably low. Only one in ten people surveyed knew the North-east has one of the UK's fastest-growing digital technology sectors. Just a third were aware that 20% of Scotland's food and drink output comes from this region.

Those figures should give us pause because, if we are not telling our own story effectively to people who live and work here, how can we expect investors, governments and international markets to fully understand what this region has become?

For too long, Aberdeen and the North-east have suffered from an outdated narrative - one that reduces us to a single industry and too often portrays our economy through the lens of decline rather than opportunity.

Yes, we face challenges. The energy transition is creating uncertainty. Jobs have been lost. Confidence has been tested. Businesses are navigating political volatility, rising costs and global competition. But the notion that this region is somehow yesterday's economy is simply wrong.

This remains one of the most innovative and productive regional economies in the UK. It is a region that exports expertise around the world and is pioneering technologies that will help shape the future of energy and industry. It is also a region with the capability, infrastructure and talent to diversify successfully - if we back ourselves strongly enough.

That last point is critical because economic diversification is not just about policy, investment or infrastructure. It is also about confidence. Confidence influences whether businesses invest, whether talented young people stay, whether entrepreneurs take risks and whether external investors see opportunity here. We cannot build that confidence if our public conversation is dominated by pessimism or if we continue underselling ourselves.

We need to become far more ambitious and coordinated in how we communicate the North-east story. That means celebrating success more loudly, promoting the breadth of industries already thriving here and championing innovation, entrepreneurship and investment at every opportunity. It also means making the case - relentlessly - that this region remains one of the best places in the UK to do business.

Government has a role to play in supporting diversification, of course.

But so do businesses, civic leaders, educators, the media and communities themselves. We all have a responsibility to shape the narrative because diversification is not something that will happen to us. It is something we must actively drive, support and believe in.

The encouraging thing is that the foundations are already there. The North-east has reinvented itself before and it can do so again. But if we want the world to recognise the scale of opportunity here, we first need to make sure we recognise it ourselves.

The logo for M114, featuring the letters 'M114' in a white, stylized, handwritten font.

**Russell Borthwick**  
*Chief Executive*



# OUR PREMIER PARTNERS

The Chamber sits at the heart of the North-east business community and one of our core aims is to help create the economic conditions and business environment which will allow this region to flourish.

Our premier partners see the value of a strong regional Chamber and choose to engage with us at this level to reinforce their ongoing commitment to the region and its economy.

Without their support we would not be able to undertake much of the work that we do. Their engagement is hugely valued and appreciated.

**If you are interested in joining them, we'd love to talk to you!**



# Welcome to the Chamber



## Ocean Installer

Unlocking energy above and below the waves. Ocean Installer delivers complex offshore and subsea solutions, helping clients unlock energy above and below the waves. The company offers a wide range of services such as SURF (subsea, umbilicals, risers and flowlines), mooring, decommissioning and offshore renewables.

**T** 01224 900111  
**W** [www.oceaninstaller.com](http://www.oceaninstaller.com)  
**E** [Gillian.sharp@oceaninstaller.com](mailto:Gillian.sharp@oceaninstaller.com)  
**C** Gillian Sharp



## GEG Capital Ltd

GEG Capital Ltd is a full project life-cycle energy and infrastructure partner.

**W** [www.glo-bal.com](http://www.glo-bal.com)  
**T** +441463725460  
**E** [katherine.milne@glo-bal.com](mailto:katherine.milne@glo-bal.com)



## First Aid at Work Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire

First Aid at Work Aberdeen & Aberdeenshire delivers accredited first aid and mental health training, supporting businesses to stay compliant while building confidence to respond not only in emergencies, but in everyday situations.

**T** 07908 400345  
**W** [www.firstaidatworkaberdeen.co.uk](http://www.firstaidatworkaberdeen.co.uk)  
**E** [sarahphillips@firstaidatworkaberdeen.co.uk](mailto:sarahphillips@firstaidatworkaberdeen.co.uk)  
**C** Sarah Phillips



## The Pike Partnership

The Pike Partnership LTD is a financial advice company specialising in investment, retirement and protection planning.

**T** 07812 117734  
**W** [partnership.sjp.co.uk/partner/laurapike](http://partnership.sjp.co.uk/partner/laurapike)  
**E** [laura.pike@sjpp.co.uk](mailto:laura.pike@sjpp.co.uk)



## Thorntons Law LLP

Thorntons is Scotland's fourth largest independent law firm, with a 170-year heritage and a growing national and international presence. Operating from 14 offices, the firm supports more than 300,000 businesses and individuals with a full-service offering, creating a distinctive position in the legal market.

**T** 01224 648222  
**W** [thorntons-law.co.uk](http://thorntons-law.co.uk)  
**E** [aberdeen@thorntons-law.co.uk](mailto:aberdeen@thorntons-law.co.uk)



## Wood Mackenzie

Wood Mackenzie is the global leader in analytics, insights and proprietary data across the entire energy and natural resources landscape. For over 50 years its work has guided the decisions of the world's most influential energy producers, utilities companies, financial institutions and governments.

**T** +44 330 174 7365  
**E** [adam.craig@woodmac.com](mailto:adam.craig@woodmac.com)  
**C** Adam Craig

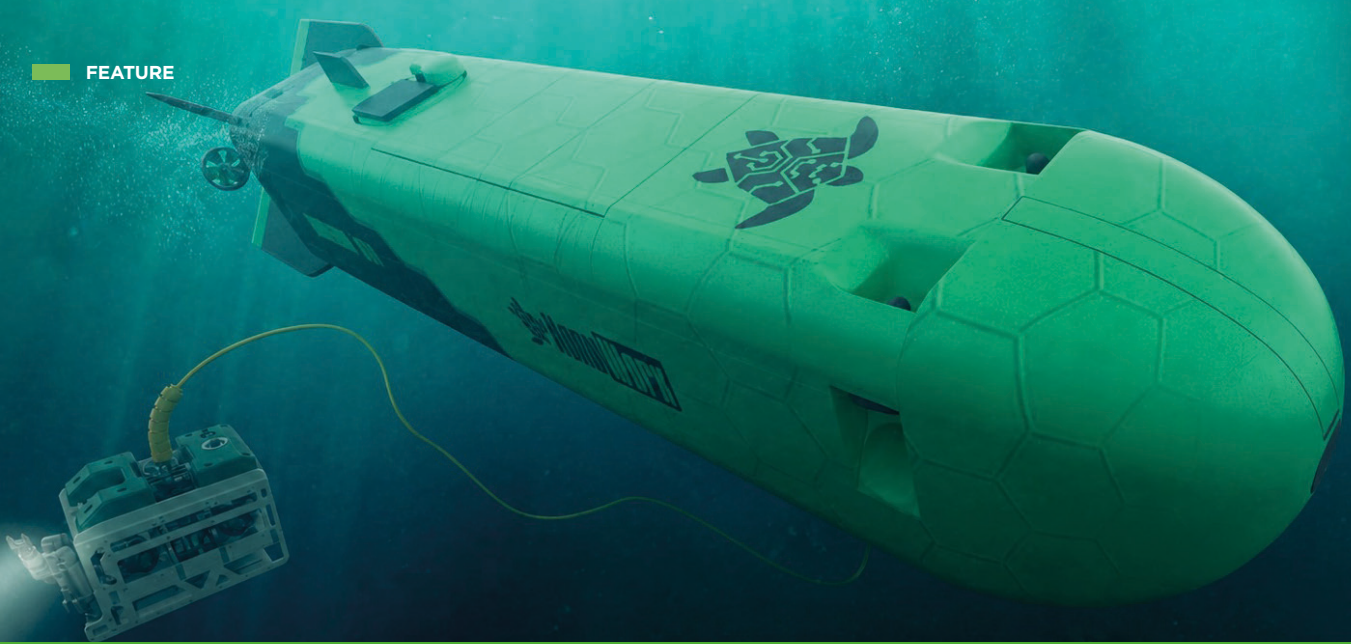


## Protea

Protea provides legal, contract management and supply chain support, helping organisations manage risk, strengthen governance and improve delivery. It also develops technology to enhance contract review, visibility and performance.

**T** +447747404840  
**W** [www.protea-consult.com](http://www.protea-consult.com)  
**E** [info@protea-consult.com](mailto:info@protea-consult.com)

**DON'T  
 JUST  
 JOIN,  
 JOIN IN**



# Why our energy expertise is becoming a strategic defence asset

By Ryan Crighton

**For decades, the North-east of Scotland exported oil, gas and engineering expertise across the world. Today, that same ecosystem is becoming an increasingly valuable defence capability cluster for the Western alliance.**

From subsea robotics and autonomous systems to naval sustainment, AI governance and critical infrastructure protection, companies and institutions rooted in Aberdeen's energy economy are being drawn into global defence priorities.

The geopolitical impact of the war in Ukraine, growing tensions in the Arctic and Indo-Pacific, concern over subsea infrastructure security, and NATO's renewed focus on deterrence have accelerated demand for technologies and operational expertise that North-east Scotland has spent decades refining offshore.

The region's diversification story is no longer simply about replacing oil and gas jobs with renewables. Increasingly, it is about applying offshore capability to national security, resilience and defence.

One of the clearest examples comes from Aberdeen-headquartered THREE60 Energy, which recently secured a major U.S. Navy contract under the Amphibious Sustainment Readiness Program.

The five-year award will support davit systems aboard San Antonio-class amphibious warfare ships, providing overhaul services, technical support and life cycle management.

Walter Thain, Group CEO of THREE60 Energy, said: "This contract marks an important step in the continued expansion of THREE60's U.S. business. Our focus on building a strong domestic presence, combined with our OEM expertise, is enabling us to scale effectively and support increasing demand for sustainment, overhaul and life cycle services across the region."

That expertise was built in the North Sea, where reliability, remote operations, safety assurance and asset integrity are essential. Those same disciplines are now increasingly vital to defence organisations operating complex

fleets and critical maritime infrastructure.

Perhaps nowhere is the overlap between energy and defence more obvious than subsea operations.

The sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines in 2022 transformed how governments view underwater infrastructure. Fibre optic cables, pipelines, offshore wind assets and seabed power connections are now regarded as strategic vulnerabilities as much as commercial assets.

That has created opportunities for firms developing advanced subsea autonomy.

Aberdeen-based HonuWorx recently became the first company to receive a NATO DIANA Rapid Adoption Service research and development contract on behalf of a NATO ally.

The company – originally focused on offshore energy applications – will support Canadian defence research by developing deeper-water autonomous subsea capabilities.

NATO DIANA stated the work would help “effectively and efficiently operate and maintain future, deepwater power and data infrastructure and support the testing of emerging deep-sea technologies”.

HonuWorx’s Loggerhead system replaces large offshore support vessels with autonomous underwater “mothership” submarines capable of deploying robotic systems remotely from shore.

Lee Wilson, CEO of HonuWorx, said: “Autonomous subsea systems are evolving from data collection platforms toward the delivery of real capability, with the potential to change how sensitive seabed operations are conducted.”

The diversification trend extends beyond autonomous systems.

Peterhead engineering firm JBS Group (Scotland) Ltd is also translating offshore engineering capability into defence applications, supporting the UK, Australian, Norwegian and Canadian navies through specialist blast containment solutions.

These are highly specialised engineering scopes demanding precision manufacturing, operational reliability and rapid delivery capability - strengths long embedded within the North-east supply chain.

According to analysis by EY, increasing UK defence spending to between 3.5% and 5% of GDP by 2035 could generate an additional £30billion annually for the economy by 2045.

Peter Arnold, UK Chief Economist at EY, said: “If spent appropriately, increased defence budgets provide a dual opportunity to bolster UK security and generate lasting economic benefits that support the government’s growth agenda.”

For the North-east, the opportunity lies not in building tanks or missiles, but in exporting the enabling expertise behind modern defence operations: robotics, subsea systems, autonomous technology, remote inspection, digital infrastructure and asset integrity management.

The shift is not limited to engineering firms.

At the University of Aberdeen, Dr Maria Manoli recently secured almost £300,000 from the British Academy to lead international research into the governance of artificial intelligence in space.

Dr Manoli said: “AI is rapidly becoming embedded in space systems, yet the governance frameworks that apply to its use beyond Earth remain fragmented and underdeveloped, raising legal and cybersecurity challenges.”

For years, diversification in the North-east has often been framed as a choice between oil and gas or renewables. Reality is proving more complex – and arguably more promising.

Many of the capabilities developed through offshore energy are not disappearing. They are being repurposed.

The same region that became a global centre of excellence for harsh-environment engineering is now emerging as a strategic hub for subsea autonomy, infrastructure protection, naval sustainment and advanced engineering.

As NATO countries ramp up investment in defence capability, underwater security and autonomous systems, North-east Scotland is increasingly well-positioned to benefit.

The global demand for energy expertise may fluctuate. The demand for resilience, security and critical infrastructure protection almost certainly will not.



Lee Wilson

# Why steady growth still wins in business

By Scott Willox, Director, Goldstar Services

There's a lot said in business about having to run just to stand still.

Marketplaces are forever shifting and the demands of clients, combined with varying levels of competition, ensure there's never a dull moment in business these days.

As a long-established local business, we've been on the front foot for as long as I can remember. We've adapted, been flexible, and always sought out opportunities to grow and diversify our business.

However, we won't be running headlong into change for change's sake. Or knee jerking into being something that's just not us. The risks of doing that are simply too great. Under our leadership, Goldstar's philosophy has been and always will be: growth must be steady and sustainable.

When you've worked long and hard to build a brand that has quality service and reliability at its heart, it's imperative to protect that at all costs.

At Goldstar, we continue to diversify our business, expanding into new areas, introducing value-added service lines, and widening the scope of many of our relationships with clients.

Through our construction division, we have forged strong partnerships with many of Scotland's major housebuilders over decades.

This is now seeing us providing a complete range of services to many key clients, as well as securing new business and contract extensions through the power of our reputation.

This has helped us achieve unprecedented growth, with our teams delivering exceptional service across a record number of Scotland's 'live' construction sites. Increasing numbers of business clients are engaging with us as they see the value of contracting Goldstar – a single supplier – to provide a full range of cleaning and maintenance facilities, including gardening, window cleaning, and winter services.

In our domestic market, we are as busy as ever, and always ready to adapt to the changing seasons, and the ever-changeable needs of our clients.

We continually reinvest to support our teams, our logistics fleet, and the technologies to efficiently serve the market.

Diversification is a great thing, and we are always astute in assessing opportunities that will strengthen our business and add value to existing and new clients.

However, we know how much effort and focus is required to simply maintain sensible business growth. We won't be wildly charging around seeking to secure contracts at any cost, given the inherent threat to service quality and reputation.

If I could share one message that's helped keep us grounded over the years, it would be: there's nothing boring about going steady. It's what we do and it's what we believe is a key to sustainable success and, ultimately, client satisfaction.





# Strength in partnerships Supporting local

Get in touch for a free, no obligation quote  
for all your cleaning and maintenance needs.

Call 01224 897063 Email [sales@gold-star.co.uk](mailto:sales@gold-star.co.uk)



# What did the election tell us about the future the public wants for the North Sea?

**Ever since last month's ballots were counted, political obsessives have been poring over the Scottish election result searching for clues about the constitution and who emerged bruised or strengthened from the campaign.**

But for those working in energy, the result tells another story entirely. A far more important one.

Because beneath the noise of party politics, Scotland's voters delivered one of the clearest democratic signals the North Sea sector has received in years: the public still wants an oil and gas industry with a future.

Not without transition. But certainly not shut down prematurely.

That conclusion becomes difficult to ignore when you look at the manifestos alongside the votes cast.

## Scotland does not believe the current approach to the North Sea is working.

The SNP, Scottish Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Reform UK all campaigned on reforming, scrapping or replacing the Energy Profits Levy (EPL), arguing that the current regime is damaging investment, jobs and long-term confidence in the basin.

Combined, those parties secured 3.2 million votes - almost three quarters (73.3%) of the national ballots cast. That is not a fringe position. It is the mainstream view of the Scottish electorate.

The details differed significantly. Reform UK took an aggressively anti-net zero position. The Conservatives called for the levy to be scrapped outright. The SNP and Liberal Democrats argued instead for more stable replacement systems that would still tax extraordinary profits while protecting investment and energy security.

But the central message was remarkably consistent: Scotland does not believe the current approach to the North Sea is working.

For an industry that has spent the past few years absorbing political hostility, investment uncertainty and increasingly polarised rhetoric, that matters enormously.

Because the election result suggests the public debate has been considerably more nuanced than parts of politics have allowed.

For years, the national conversation around energy has often been framed in absolutes. Either immediate shutdown or climate denial. Either endless extraction or economic collapse.

Most voters appear to have rejected both arguments.

Scotland remains overwhelmingly supportive of renewable energy and the wider transition to net zero. Every major party, apart from Reform, campaigned on expanding offshore wind, hydrogen, grid infrastructure and low-carbon investment in some form.

But the electorate also appears unconvinced by the idea that domestic oil and gas production should be rapidly dismantled before replacement industries are fully scaled and capable of carrying the economic weight currently borne by the North Sea.

That is not a rejection of climate ambition. To me, it is a demand for realism. And perhaps nowhere is that clearer than in the performance of the parties at either end of the energy debate.

The Scottish Greens advanced the most uncompromising anti-oil-and-gas platform of any major party, continuing to oppose new North Sea developments and advocating an end to further extraction.

Climate concerns remain important to Scottish voters, particularly younger demographics, but the election demonstrated limited national appetite for a hardline anti-industry position.

At the same time, Reform UK's attempt to frame renewables and net zero itself as the central problem also failed to fully land with voters.

That matters too.

Because it suggests Scotland is not moving towards either extreme. The public does not want an abrupt abandonment of fossil fuels. But neither does it want to abandon the transition itself.

Instead, voters appear to be converging around something far less ideological and far more practical: a managed transition which protects jobs, investment, energy security and industrial capability while renewables continue to scale.

Frankly, that sounds a lot like the position held by much of the energy workforce itself.

For years, many workers across the North-east have felt politically stranded - portrayed either as obstacles to climate progress or as symbols within a wider culture war. Yet the election result suggests most voters instinctively understand the complexity far better than political debate sometimes reflects.

People understand that Scotland can lead in renewables while still requiring oil and gas for decades to come.

They understand that energy security matters.

They understand that shutting down domestic production does not eliminate demand - it simply imports supply, jobs and emissions from elsewhere.

And increasingly, they appear to understand that unstable taxation and inconsistent policy come with real-world consequences.



**Ryan Crighton,**  
Director of Policy,  
Aberdeen & Grampian  
Chamber of Commerce



MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY



**Charlotte Wright**  
*Director of CSR & Food Strategy*  
Elior UK

## In partnership with



### Describe your early career path.

I began my career driven by a passion for people and people management.

After gaining CIPD qualifications, I progressed through a number of HR leadership roles, building experience in organisational development, employee engagement and leadership capability.

### How did you arrive in your current industry?

While working at Elior, I made a deliberate side-step from HR into CSR around nine years ago.

I recognised early that sustainability and purpose would become increasingly central to the food and hospitality sector, and I wanted to be part of shaping that change.

### What's the best thing about your job?

The ability to connect people to a clear sense of purpose.

### What has been your biggest career challenge or proudest achievement?

Building and leading a multidisciplinary team of around 20 people and creating a food strategy that is both values-led and commercially grounded, genuinely built by colleagues and embraced across the organisation.

I was also delighted to be recognised on the WiHTL 'Women to Watch' index.

### What advice would you give your 18-year-old self?

Trust your instincts and do a job that you really care about and seek out mentors and coaches early on.

Successful coaching can be powerful and transformative and really support career development and confidence.

### What's something surprising that most people wouldn't know about your job?

How much of food strategy is actually about people, culture and

behaviour change, rather than food alone.

### What does the future look like for you?

Seeing our Food Strategy for 2030 through to completion.

We have stretching targets to achieve for Elior centred around sustainability, health and customer satisfaction.

The future looks bright for my teams and I'm excited for all of us to drive an initiative that has such an impactful benefit for our customers and clients.



### How do you unwind in your time off?

I love a hike - you can't beat the feeling of setting off with a flask of tea and a snack in a backpack to explore the countryside.

### What did you want to be when you were little?

An architect, I used to spend hours drawing houses and building them out of Lego.

### What was your first job?

I was a pot wash, and I hated it. I got paid £20 cash in hand each night and lasted four shifts.

# Aberdeen landmark enters new era with launch of the Net Zero Technology Centre Technology Testing Hub

A major milestone in the evolution of Scotland's energy transition sector has been reached as the Net Zero Technology Centre (NZTC) is set to reopen the former Weatherford Evaluation Centre, located within Aberdeen Energy Park at Bridge of Don.

NZTC is launching a major technology testing hub in the heart of the North-east of Scotland, agreeing a long-term lease at the unique site, which closed in 2020. This represents a major opportunity for Aberdeen to cement its position as a worldwide leader in innovation for the energy sector, with the nearest equivalent facility being located in Norway.

The agreement has been secured with AM Sci Tech, a subsidiary of Hurstwood Holdings and owner of the Aberdeen Energy & Innovation Parks.

The move represents a new chapter for NZTC as it transitions to a commercially driven, self-sustaining organisation, delivering industry-led services that will play a vital role in the future of the North-east economy.

The centre is reshaping how it works with industry, moving away from a broad, publicly funded innovation remit towards a more focused approach that includes the delivery of targeted government-funded programmes, an expanded technology services arm, and the continued growth of its TechX accelerator one of Europe's leading energy start-up hubs.

## A New Hub for Energy Transition Innovation

The NZTC's Technology Testing Hub is set to become home to a state-of-the-art testing facility, purpose-built to support equipment validation ahead of offshore deployment and decommissioning.

At the core of the relaunch is the development of an advanced drilling and testing environment, located at the existing borehole site. This facility will deliver a full-scale, highly realistic simulation setting for evaluating technologies, systems and methodologies used in drilling and well operations, without the need for costly offshore deployment.

A multi-million-pound drilling rig will be installed on-site, with construction of modular, two-storey office buildings already in planning. These are expected to be operational by autumn 2026, with the rig installation scheduled for September.

David Cameron, Head of Industry & Commercial Projects at NZTC, said: "This move marks a pivotal moment in our evolution. Transitioning to a commercially sustainable model allows us to continue supporting the energy sector with world-class testing facilities, while driving innovation in net zero and beyond.

"investment in this facility, including the installation of a full-scale drilling rig and advanced testing infrastructure, demonstrates our commitment to supporting the energy sector through its transition to net zero.

"By creating a highly realistic, configurable testing environment, we are enabling operators and technology developers to de-risk innovation before deployment offshore.

This not only improves safety and efficiency but accelerates the adoption of new technologies across decommissioning, well intervention and emerging areas such as geothermal and carbon capture. We are proud to continue our role in driving innovation from the North East of Scotland while building a sustainable, industry-backed future."

Gordon Pirie, Asset Manager at AM Sci Tech, added: "This is a story of industrial regeneration, reflecting the continued evolution of the site.

Securing NZTC as a long-term occupier is a major milestone and a strong endorsement of both the location and our vision for Aberdeen Energy & Innovation Parks. This agreement represents a significant multi-million-pound investment, transforming the site into a highly specialised, future-ready facility aligned with the evolving needs of the energy sector."



# the MEMBER MEET the M



**Leona McDermid,**  
*Chief Executive*  
Aberdeen Foyer

### **Give us the elevator pitch for your business.**

Aberdeen Foyer tackles youth homelessness and poverty by offering wraparound support that helps people build skills, wellbeing,

and confidence. We ensure access to safe housing, learning, and work opportunities while fostering connection and inclusion. We believe everyone can thrive and achieve their potential with the right support in their lives.

### **Who are your customers?**

We support young people aged 12-25 and adults in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, particularly families facing tough life circumstances that prevent a positive future.

We work alongside them to build better lives, while also collaborating with funders, commissioners, and diverse partners who share and strengthen our mission.

### **What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?**

Funding is reducing while needs grow. We must be agile and creative

to support people and changes to the system. We are pioneering prevention of youth homelessness by introducing Upstream in schools and raising household income supporting people into Fair Work. We are transforming digital thinking ensuring best use of our resources.

### **What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?**

Always look ahead, it's too easy to get stuck on the needs right in front of you (action bias) rather than developing and honing a sense of urgency around the things that can support actions for the future. Be a brilliant listener and nurture relationships, be curious and thoughtful, always seek to learn from people!



**Carole Innes,**  
*Business Development Manager Energy*  
ATPI

### **Give us the elevator pitch for your business.**

ATPI is a trusted global travel partner for the energy industry. We have extensive energy sector experience with innovative technical solutions and cost reduction strategies. Our MI assists our clients with their ESG strategies and spend forecasting.

We look after some of the largest energy companies in the world as well as smaller SMEs. Our clients range from large shipping companies with large crewing requirements to companies who use us for hotel and air travel. ATPI are flexible enough that we can cater for most sized businesses.

### **What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?**

Our biggest challenges and opportunities are rising costs and economic uncertainty.

Air fares, hotels and car rental prices have all increased post pandemic. Sustainability is also a challenge for companies trying to fulfil their ESG policies.

Thankfully at ATPI we have excellent relationships with suppliers which enables us to obtain the best prices available and keep costs down. We have also introduced ATPI

Halo which is a CO2 measurement, reduction and compensation service allowing our clients to accurately measure their carbon footprint.

### **What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?**

Use the Chamber as much as you can to build your network. The speed networking events are great for meeting people then following up at a later date for a more in depth meeting.

The business breakfasts are a brilliant way to hear about current events in Aberdeen and to build networks. The UMF events sell out so quickly and are always brilliant nights with interesting speakers.

### **What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?**

Knowing we have a locally based organisation who are helpful in making introductions and who are continually pushing for Aberdeen to be the best it can be.

### **Who are your customers?**

# MEMBER MEET *the* ME



**Paul Binnie,**  
*Director for UK & Europe*  
Nomad Infrastructure Limited

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Nomad Infrastructure specialises in innovation, development and delivery of high-value capital projects across the energy, industrial, and infrastructure sectors. We pride ourselves on our ability to combine technical

excellence with a commitment to sustainable growth and resilient delivery.

## Who are your customers?

Our customers are diverse, spanning multiple sectors and geographies. In the United States, where our business originated, we work with large universities implementing cleaner, more efficient combined heat and power and district heating systems; industrial clients upgrading their power generation; and new-market developers delivering large-scale solar and Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) projects. We also partner with hyperscale data centre operators accelerating the delivery of resilient, sustainable energy infrastructure.

In the UK, our first major client is Evolution Hydrogen Group (EHG), with whom we are developing a series of green hydrogen projects, beginning with a 500 MW facility

near Peterhead. This flagship project combines renewable hydrogen production utilising curtailed energy, advanced water purification using non-groundwater sources, geothermal integration, and future methanation potential. We are also supporting data centre developers to ensure timely, efficient delivery of their fast-evolving infrastructure and power requirements.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

My Nana had a lot of sage and wise words of advice, many of which I still live by today, but the one that's really stuck with me is: be honest. For me, it's about acting with integrity and treating everyone with respect, no matter who they are. It's something that served me well in the military and continues to guide how I work and build relationships in business today. Simple advice, but it's done me proud.



**David Gill,**  
*Technical Manager*  
Cable Solutions Worldwide Ltd

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Founded in 2003, Cable Solutions Worldwide Ltd has become a trusted partner to the global energy sector. With a wealth of experience supplying a diverse range of harsh environment cable across the oil and gas, marine and shipbuilding, subsea

and renewables sectors. From Top Drive Service Loops to power / instrumentation, fibre and data cabling to our own inhouse cable design department, we have built up an unrivalled position within the cable industry. Our broad scope of supply within these industry sectors, backed by one of the largest stock holdings of offshore wire and cable, make us completely unique.

## Who are your customers?

Our customers span the energy, offshore, marine, shipbuilding, and renewables sectors. We work with operators, contractors, and manufacturers who require high-performance, reliable, and fast support with our global reach and sector diversity allowing us to serve clients with complex requirements, wherever they are in the world.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

The changing scope in the North Sea has opened doors for us to expand globally in recent years.

With our new facility due to open in Abu Dhabi in 2026, this will form part of our strategic growth plans with focus on supporting our client base overseas with inventory in place to provide the fast turnaround service we are known for. We remain committed to facing the complexities and challenges in the local energy sector here in the UK and Europe with the 'can do' attitude we pride ourselves on.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Embrace challenges head on. Take ownership and inspire others. One of our unofficial company mottos has always been "The answer's yes, what's the question?"

## What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

It's good to talk. The Chamber connects us with like-minded businesses, fosters collaboration, and opens doors to new opportunities and partnerships across the region.

## Behind the scenes with the Tall Ships Aberdeen

As official video partners for The Tall Ships Races Aberdeen 2025, Signal were commissioned to revisit this award-winning project, collaborating with VisitScotland to produce three case study videos, shining a spotlight on the meticulous planning and people who brought the event to life.

The case studies reveal the scale of the undertaking, from recruiting and managing the core event team to working with contractors and suppliers and enlisting volunteers. These elements were essential to delivering a festival of such ambition and scale. The videos highlight the vibrant atmosphere in Aberdeen and explore the logistics, teamwork, and electric energy that defined the event.

With an estimated 500,000 visits to the Aberdeen quayside and city events, the festival's success showcased the skill and teamwork of all involved. By capturing partners' voices, the case study series celebrates the human stories behind this landmark event. Signal, experienced in large-scale productions, felt this event stood out for its pride in place and shared experience.

Signal spoke with Event Operations Lead Stephen O' Neill and Project Manager Emma Wadee, gaining insights into their strategies, challenges, and proud moments. Pre-event planning was central, as the team mapped out strategies, engaged stakeholders, and laid the groundwork for a seamless experience. Collaboration between event leads, contractors and volunteers was crucial, demonstrating adaptability and dedication.

Jordan Harkins, Head of Communications at Port of Aberdeen, praised Signal's video content for telling the story of the event and supporting the city's biggest celebration in a generation.

Signal's team is no stranger to large-scale productions, but this event was something special. It was about pride in place, in a shared experience, and a city coming alive with colour and sound.

You can watch all three case studies here:



## Aurora trains army of wind workers from military ranks to tackle renewables skills shortage

Scottish company Aurora Energy Services is tackling a skills shortage in renewable energy by training military service leavers who will be "site ready" to take up posts in the wind sector.

Delivered at Aurora's Renewable Energy Training Centre in Inverness, the course has been specifically designed to convert military service leavers into immediately deployable personnel for onshore and offshore wind projects.

Two of the participants on the seven-week Military to Wind pilot programme - which is supported by industry training bodies - have already been offered jobs.

The pilot programme aligns with broader efforts from government and industry bodies to support workforce transition and was jointly funded by the Ministry of Defence and the Engineering Construction Industry Training Board (ECITB), which played a key role in shaping the course standards.

Participants are selected from service leavers with an existing Level 3 engineering background - mechanical, electrical or instrumentation - ensuring they already have a technical foundation that can be built upon.

Andy Elrod, Director of Training at Aurora Energy Services, said: "The qualities service leavers bring - discipline, attention to detail, safety awareness, technical competence and the ability to perform in demanding environments - are exactly what the wind industry needs."

"Applicants completing the course will be site-ready so they can go out and be gainfully employed in roles including pre-assembly construction and operations and maintenance."



# YOUR BUSINESS DESERVES TO STAND OUT.

## BUT DOES YOUR MARKETING DRIVE GROWTH?

We're a strategic marketing partner for ambitious businesses. Helping you show up with confidence and get results. No jargon. No fluff. Just clear thinking and strong execution.

ABERDEEN  
& NORTH EAST

INFO@YOURDUENORTH.COM  
WWW.YOURDUENORTH.COM



TRUSTED BY GROWING BUSINESSES ACROSS SCOTLAND  
FOR OVER 10 YEARS

Strategic Marketing | Brand Clarity | Commercial Growth

# One in five workers has a long-term condition - can your business afford to ignore it?

**Author:** Professor Alexandros Zangelidis  
| University of Aberdeen Business School



**One in five working-age adults in the UK lives with a long-term health condition yet most employers have no clear plan for supporting them. That's a risk most businesses can no longer afford to ignore.**

These conditions - whether thyroid disorders, chronic pain, autoimmune diseases or other ongoing health issues - often affect energy, concentration and overall wellbeing, key drivers of workplace performance.

With the right understanding, structures and support, employers can unlock the full potential of these employees while fostering healthier, more resilient workplaces.

Take thyroid conditions as an example. One in 20 people in the UK lives with a thyroid disorder, most of them women, and the symptoms can significantly affect work performance, confidence and career progression.

Research I have conducted with Professor Catia Montagna at the university shows that thyroid dysfunctions are linked to increased sick leave and reduced working ability, but outcomes improve dramatically when employers take a proactive, informed approach.

We developed a free Workplace Thyroid Toolkit to help employers work with staff struggling with this long-term condition.

The toolkit has already been downloaded by nearly 500 managers and employees across a wide range of sectors, highlighting that thyroid conditions are a workforce issue that cuts across every industry.

Designed to raise awareness, encourage open conversations and provide practical guidance, the toolkit offers employers and managers - regardless of organisation size or HR capacity - clear steps to support affected staff.

It focuses on three practical areas: raising awareness of how thyroid conditions affect work; encouraging open, supportive conversations; and offering reasonable workplace adjustments that enable employees to maintain productivity without compromising their health.

Importantly, our research shows that employer empathy and understanding significantly reduce the negative impact of thyroid dysfunctions on employee engagement, productivity and career progression.

These lessons extend far beyond thyroid conditions. Our new guide, *The Long-term Conditions in the Workplace: A Guide for Employees and Employers*, co-developed in partnership with NHS West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership, provides a broader framework for supporting employees with a wide range of chronic conditions.

The evidence-based guide emphasises that long-term conditions often affect stamina, focus, cognitive ability and attendance, yet with early conversations and appropriate adjustments, many employees can continue to thrive in their careers.

The cost of replacing a skilled employee can exceed £30,000 once recruitment, training and lost productivity are factored in.

Retaining that person - with the right support in place - preserves institutional knowledge, strengthens organisational culture and is almost always the smarter financial choice.

The guide outlines practical measures such as structured one-to-one conversations, reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act 2010, and clear checklists to help managers respond consistently and compassionately.

Often, the changes required are modest. The difference they make is not.

Ultimately, both documents point to the same truth: when employers create environments where health challenges can be discussed openly and addressed proactively, everyone benefits.

Employees feel respected, supported and empowered. Employers build loyal, motivated teams - and organisations become healthier places to work.

As long-term health conditions become more common across the workforce, employers who respond proactively will be better positioned to retain talent, reduce costs and build resilient organisations.

Both resources are free to download. For businesses across the North-east, acting on this now is an opportunity to lead - not follow.

OPINION  
OPINI

# BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



**Dave Ramage,**  
*Head of Commercial,*  
IKM Testing UK

## Who or what has been the biggest influence on your career?

Starting my professional career as a Trainee Quantity Surveyor I was fortunate to have not one, but two incredible mentors. Together the training and advice they provided me at the very start of my career has lasted throughout and will continue to do so.

Particularly as at the time I started with the business they were at the end of a project which had not went smoothly and I worked closely with the Director on building a claim.

It was a very good lesson on how not to run a project at day one of my career, a lesson which has stayed with me to this day.

## What's the most effective piece of training or personal development you have undertaken?

In my experience it was stepping into a management position so, not a training course, rather on the job training.

With no formal management training, I had to find the correct way to approach situations which allowed me to learn and grow in the position.

I have been very fortunate to work with a lot of good people, who have pushed me to develop my skills every day.

## What's the biggest lesson you have learned in business?

That's an easy one – get everything in writing. Unfortunately, I have had to learn this the hard way. Too often meetings are held, conversations are had, agreements are made with no follow up confirmation in writing for all parties to document they agree with what was verbally discussed.

Such a simple task when completed avoids confusion, inefficiencies but most importantly protects those involved.

## What's been your proudest career achievement to date?

I would have to say joining the Senior Management Team at IKM Testing UK. I started with IKM in December 2013 as an Estimator with little knowledge of the services provided by the business.

The then Director, Mark Rasmusen, I guess took a chance on me based on an introduction via an ex-colleague from my surveying days. I have seen the business at its lowest, but I am hugely proud of what the business has been able to achieve since.

Today, as Head of Commercial, together with my colleagues in the Senior Management Team, my role is to guide the business to the next stage of growth and I am massively excited by that.

## What's the best thing about doing business in the North-east of Scotland?

The best thing about doing business in the North-east of Scotland is the people. Quick witted, energetic, determined, passionate about the area, loyal - do a good job with quality service and people will stick with you. With all this, it always fascinates me that no matter where in the world you travel, 9 times out of 10, there is a chance of meeting someone from the Aberdeenshire area. Someone who knows someone you know. A shared affinity for the area and a tale or two told of things in common. We might be a small corner of the world, but we certainly have no issue reaching far corners of the world.

## What was your first job?

Front of house at McDonalds.

## Who or what inspires you most?

Any Scottish sports person achieving the pinnacle of accomplishments. I love seeing Scotland being put on the map through sporting achievements. I dare to dream for this summer.

## What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?

"Blue sky thinking" A little piece of me dies each time I hear it.

## How do you relax?

A good walk with my dogs.



Scan here for  
more info

# TEST BEFORE YOU INVEST

[agcc.co.uk/research](https://agcc.co.uk/research)

## Issue

Don't know if a new product / service will work; unsure of audience demand?

## Our solution

Feasibility studies, latent demand analysis, customer surveys

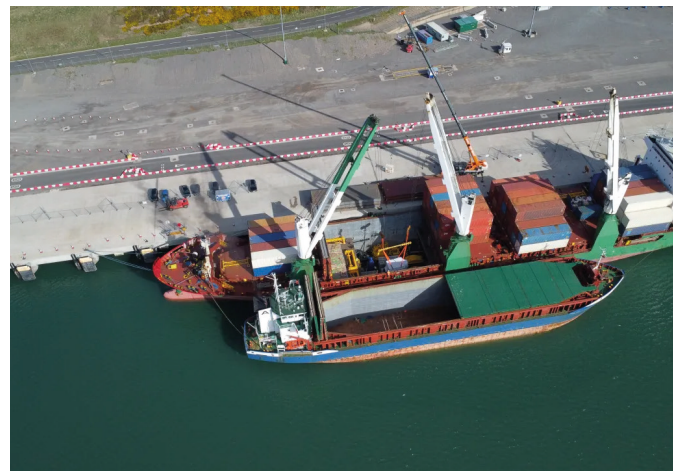
---

## Sea-Cargo and UBSL complete first vessel-to-vessel cargo transfer in the Port of Aberdeen

UBSL Caribbean Line (part of the UAL Alliance) and Sea-Cargo made history in the Port of Aberdeen's South Harbour with the transfer of two 85-tonne generators from the cargo vessel Baltic Blue to UBSL's cargo vessel BOCS Vision, the first recorded vessel-to-vessel cargo transfer in the port's near 900-year history.

The lifting operation between the two vessels was complex, involving two tandem lifts using the ship's cranes on the UBSL vessel, with stevedoring provided by Sea-Cargo on both vessels.

The operation was the culmination of a programme of detailed planning, close collaboration and careful execution to ensure a safe, efficient and cost-effective cargo transfer.



# What market signals tell us about our region's next chapter



## Following on from last month's look at the strengths our region has in reinvention, we look now at the current diversification situation and what the data tells us...

For businesses across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire, the conversation around diversification is no longer theoretical. It is grounded in real-time market signals and what data is telling us is something important about where our regional economy is heading next.

The latest findings from the Quarterly Economic Survey (QES) provide one of the clearest indicators yet that the North-east is at a pivotal moment, not just in terms of performance but in how businesses are responding to change.

### A region under pressure and diverging from the UK

The North-east QES Q1 2026 data highlights a consistent and concerning trend: the North-east is underperforming relative to the rest of the UK across several key indicators.

Only 15% of businesses reported increased domestic sales, compared to 32% nationally. Looking ahead, nearly half of firms expect sales to fall in the next quarter (almost double the UK figure). Cashflow pressures are also significantly more acute, with 46% of businesses reporting deterioration, the highest level since 2021.

These are not isolated metrics. They are part of a broader pattern. Over the past six quarters, expectations for turnover growth have fallen sharply (from around 60% of firms anticipating growth in 2023-24 to just 29% today). Profit expectations remain weak, and investment in both capital and workforce continues to decline. Taken together, these indicators point to more than cyclical challenges. They suggest structural pressures that are shaping business confidence and decision-making across the region.

### Why evidence matters in moments like this

In times of uncertainty, understanding the direction of travel is just as important as measuring performance.

What the latest data provides is not just a snapshot, but a clearer view of emerging trends, where demand is weakening, pressures are intensifying, and resilience is beginning to show. This kind of insight allows businesses to move beyond reacting to conditions and instead make more informed, forward-looking decisions.

It also helps to distinguish between short-term fluctuations and longer-term shifts, something that is particularly important in a region undergoing economic transition.

### Diversification: Already underway?

While energy remains a defining strength of the North-east economy, diversification is now building on that foundation. Alongside continued opportunities in energy transition, there is significant growth potential across a range of other sectors that can strengthen long-term regional resilience.

Food and drink, tourism, digital technology, life sciences and advanced manufacturing are increasingly contributing to a broader and more balanced economic base. These sectors bring different strengths from export potential and rural employment to innovation, inward investment and high-value job creation.

Diversification is not about replacing one sector with another, but about creating an economy that is more connected, competitive and less vulnerable to external shocks. However, the pace of this progress is being limited.

However, consistent signals across the data highlight the barriers: taxation, cited by 62% of firms, alongside business rates, cost pressures and access to investment. Labour costs remain a significant challenge, identified by 86% of businesses, even as workforce growth slows.

These constraints matter because diversification depends on confidence. Businesses need the ability to invest, recruit and innovate and that requires a stable and supportive operating environment.

## What do these market signals tell us about our region's next chapter?

First, they confirm that the North-east's economic model is evolving. Reliance on a single dominant sector is giving way to a more complex, interconnected landscape.

Second, they highlight that the foundations for diversification are already in place. The region's strengths in engineering, technology, energy and innovation remain powerful assets that can support growth across multiple sectors.

Third, and most importantly, they underline the need for action.

Insight alone does not drive change but it enables better decisions. For businesses, that means using evidence to guide strategy: identifying new markets, managing risk and prioritising investment. For policymakers, it means creating the conditions that allow that ambition to be realised.

### A data-driven path forward

The North-east has always been defined by its ability to adapt. Today, that adaptability is being tested once again. What is different now is the depth of insight available to guide that process. The market signals are clear. The challenge is real. But so too is the opportunity.

Our next chapter will be shaped by how well we interpret those signals and how decisively we act on them.



**Samira Heshmatzadeh**, Senior Research Executive, Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

[samira.heshmatzadeh@agcc.co.uk](mailto:samira.heshmatzadeh@agcc.co.uk)

# Sydney - Rio - Aberdeen: Granite City firmly established on global street art stage

By Danny McKay

**Aberdeen is by no means a one-trick oil and gas pony these days, with flourishing industries in renewables, education, biosciences, food and drink, and more. But the Granite City has also become a heavy hitter on the global stage in a less likely area - street art.**

Nuart first launched in Aberdeen in 2017, and has grown in scale and popularity ever since.

Brilliantly complemented by other festivals like Spectra, the initiatives have transformed the Granite City in the space of a decade from a "blank canvas" into an internationally renowned hub of street art and culture.

Over 70 works of art now adorn walls across the city. You can't walk through Aberdeen without seeing groups of tourists and locals alike stopping to take it in and snap a photo.

Adrian Watson, Chief Executive of Aberdeen Inspired, explained the Nuart concept was discovered in Stavanger by his Project Manager Ross Grant, our Business Bulletin cover star, who had been tasked by the board to go out and find bold, ambitious and very different events to bring to the city.

The goal was to find something that would captivate an audience with that 'wow' factor, and Nuart certainly did that.

The festival sees famed international artists "quench their social conscience" and give back to the community by foregoing the substantial fees their commissions usually command in order to create something quite special.

Ross said: "The appetite from Aberdeen Inspired for street art stemmed from a work we commissioned at the Adelphi by Owlcat. The reaction really caught us off guard. It was quite unbelievable.

"There was a realisation that this could really improve our public spaces in the city centre.

"I was asked to go and look at how we could upscale that and deliver more street art.

"I came across Nuart in Stavanger and saw it as the gold standard option because it came with not only amazing works but with the wraparound of the whole festival event.

---

**We're here to bring people in, to get them to spend time here and with that, as clinical as it sounds, money.**

---

"The more we engaged with curator Martyn Reed, the more we realised our drive and motivation was very much aligned."

Many had tried to tempt Martyn to take the festival out of Scandinavia, but Aberdeen managed to do just that.

Adrian said: "He saw us as a blank canvas and culturally he felt this could be a real fillip for the city."

But what Nuart brings to Aberdeen goes beyond a few pretty paintings on walls here and there.

Adrian continued: "These are the very best street artists coming across for a festival. There's a bit of depth here.

"It really does bring everybody in of all demographics building that legacy. And, of course, the pieces themselves - we've built up over 70 recognisable pieces across the city.

"This isn't a short-lived festival. By its very nature it's here 365 days a year.

"On any given day you'll see folk coming off a cruise ship, you'll see locals taking photographs and doing the trails. That's great for us because we are not a cultural organisation, we're a business organisation.

"We're here to bring people in, to get them to spend time here and with that, as clinical as it sounds, money. And they do just that, so we complement everything that Nuart is. It's a business model that's not seen anywhere else."

This year's Nuart focused on poetry and the written word, believed to be the first such festival of this magnitude in the world.

It was a spectacular and powerful addition to the programme and one which leaves no room for doubt. Aberdeen is now firmly established as Scotland's street art city.

In fact, as Adrian points out, Nuart has been named by the Financial Times as one of the top six street art festivals in the world, right up there with the likes of San Francisco, Sydney and Rio de Janeiro.

He said: "We are known for our energy and our entrepreneurship and all that goes with that. We are very proud of that. But culture probably would be seen to sit elsewhere and we are provincial in many respects, taking nothing away from the wonderful APA we have, the art gallery, etc.

"But we are now a top six street art festival alongside Sydney and Rio de Janeiro. It's almost like Delboy in Only Fools and Horses - 'Paris - New York - Peckham'.

"We've got a product here that's very marketable. As we diversify, we really need to keep focused on this because this would naturally be the first port of call when you think about culture.

"Evaluations are telling us that. Cruise visitors that come in, mostly from northern Europe, love street art, and they fall upon this probably more than just about anything else, and that's why we attract so many folk into the city centre. It gives us a real dividend back."

The idea that Aberdeen has now positioned itself on the global stage for street art is one that reflects the aims of Martin Greig, Aberdeen City Council's culture spokesperson, who hailed the artists involved for "turning the medium of our city into a living art gallery".

He said: "Aberdeen is a European city of culture and Nuart reflects our ambitions to share the joy of art.

"For us, the arts is a key priority - not an optional extra.

"Culture is fundamental to the wellbeing of everyone in our city. It represents the heartbeat of our life together as a caring and diverse community.

"The council is committed to bringing world-class events to our doorstep. We have brought



the magnificent spectacle of the Tall Ships Race, the magic of the Spectra Light Festival, the soulful rhythms of our Jazz Festival - and many more examples.

"These events and gatherings are important and contribute to the health of the city.

"The focus is not only on large-scale headline activities. We are equally proud to enable a wide diversity of arts engagement for all ages and interests.

"We want to ensure cultural opportunity is expanded and is available to all ages and interests.

"The Nuart designs offer fun and thoughtful experiences all year round. They add so much to the quality of our local environment and hopefully everyone who sees them is inspired by the images."



# the MEMBER MEET the M



**Ronnie Kelman,**  
*Managing Director - ESS Energy,  
Government & Infrastructure  
ESS*

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

ESS is a specialist business of Compass Group UK & Ireland,

operating in the defence, energy, government, infrastructure, and marine and aerospace sectors.

We deliver high-quality catering, retail and facilities management services to enhance the lives of our customers, who operate in challenging environments 24/7 to help keep the country running.

## Who are your customers?

In the energy sector, we work with many of the top oil and gas operators in the UKCS, both on and offshore.

Our government business includes high-profile organisations across central government, police and secure environments. In infrastructure, we support remote temporary worker villages and welfare for Tier 1 contractors on major projects.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

First-class facilities management is increasingly important to organisations who need to provide a great workplace experience in order to attract and retain the best talent. This provides a great opportunity for us. We must collaborate with our clients to blend our sector and business-wide expertise with their specific requirements to ensure optimal results.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

I'm sure many Chamber members will feel as strongly as I do about investing in our communities. My advice would be to actively seek out and pursue opportunities to create fulfilling roles and development opportunities for local people, as well as giving businesses opportunities to join your supply chain.



**David Tawse,**  
*Managing Director  
Nimbus Blue*

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Nimbus Blue has been solving technology and security challenges for businesses across Aberdeen and beyond for over 15 years. When you call us, you speak directly to someone who can solve your issue, and, crucially, cybersecurity has been baked into everything we do from day one, long before it was a common consideration.

We're ISO 9001 and 27001 certified, offering comprehensive managed IT services, cloud solutions, and, through our consultancy division Nimbus Red, bespoke cybersecurity solutions.

## Who are your customers?

We work with businesses across all sectors, though we have particular experience in energy, engineering and finance given our Aberdeen base. Our clients range from small businesses to larger organisations who need reliable IT support and robust cybersecurity. Recent and ongoing clients include Aberdeen Football Club, Control Valve Solutions and Welsh & Taylor Wealth Management. We maintain strong long-term relationships with our clients, with an average customer relationship of over 10 years.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

The biggest challenge continues to be recruiting high-quality team members as we grow.

I think this is challenging all over the UK, but is magnified in Aberdeen.

A big opportunity right now is helping companies to develop policy and strategy around the use of AI. AI can help super-charge business processes, greatly enhancing productivity and efficiency. However, lazy adoption of this technology can lead to significant problems.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Invest in your people and your clients will feel it. Happy, empowered teams deliver exceptional service, and that's what keeps customers loyal in a crowded market.

## What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

The best thing for me is the business breakfasts. They provide the perfect balance of meeting interesting people, learning from accomplished business leaders, and food!

# MEMBER MEET *the* ME



**Angie Walker,**  
*Business Development Manager*  
Amt Intercargo UK Limited

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Based in the heart of Aberdeen, we are a trusted freight forwarding company helping businesses move goods across the world by air, road, and sea. With nearly 30 years of experience in international shipping and supply chain management,

we've built our reputation on "A Matter of Trust" through reliability, efficiency, and service that is genuinely personal.

## Who are your customers?

We are proud to support any industry that rely on precision, reliability, and global reach. We deliver fast, dependable air, road, and sea freight solutions for both offshore and onshore operations. Whether it's urgent spare parts or large-scale project cargo, we make sure everything arrives safely and on time.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

We are adapting to a fast-changing global landscape and the challenge is keeping our service fast, flexible, and cost-effective while navigating those changes. But we're embracing new technology,

strengthening our global partnerships, and exploring greener logistics options. These changes are helping us work smarter and deliver more sustainable, transparent solutions for our customers.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

In logistics, success isn't just about moving cargo, it's about building and moving relationships forward. We believe that trust, communication, and consistency are the real foundations.

## What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

We believe in the value of meeting and speaking with other businesses, exchanging ideas, and learning from each other's experiences. This helps us grow stronger partnerships and find smarter, more efficient logistical solutions.



**David Halliday,**  
*Business Development Manager*  
Roemex

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

We fix problems! We provide packaged solutions for our clients by developing and formulating speciality chemicals for the energy sector, oil and gas, offshore wind, geothermal, decommissioning and CCS projects.

We have over 40 years of expertise in management of corrosion, scale, wax, bacteria and pipeline pre-commissioning and hydrotesting.

## Who are your customers?

For an SME, we are proud to have a diverse product range, across various sectors and geographies.

Typically, our clients range from oil and gas operators and service companies to offshore wind developers (and EPCs) and geothermal project developers and owners. Basically, anywhere innovative, green chemistry can help fix operational issues.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

In our home market the biggest challenge is the continuation of the Energy Profits Levy. Compounding this, are the delays to the next offshore wind allocation round, AR7.

We need a strong home oil and gas market to make the just transition to offshore renewables.

Many opportunities reside internationally, and we have a strong portfolio of projects.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

There are far more experienced people than me to give advice! However, I believe that having a mix of tenacity and empathy has always helped me in my career.

Regardless of the scenario, regardless of the sector or geography, these traits are worth embracing.

## What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

Entirely tongue-in-cheek, but frankly the proximity to Grub Fresh Food.

Great coffee and delicious food.  
#bringbackthechunkymonkeywrap.

# Diplomatic Advisory Hub: A new resource for Aberdeen and Grampian's exporters

By Richard Oppenheim | Director, Diplomatic Advisory Hub

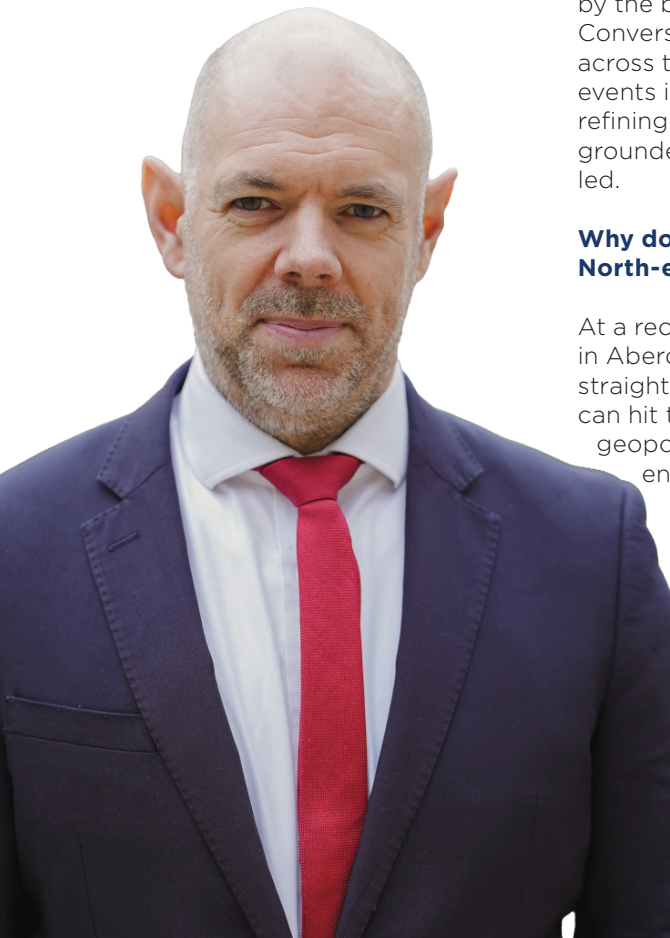
Aberdeen has always looked outward. Energy and food and drink still sit at the heart of the region's story, but more and more firms now work across global supply chains - exporting services, expertise and products well beyond the North Sea.

That opportunity comes with a new reality: geopolitics isn't background noise anymore. It can make - or break - commercial plans.

That's exactly why the Diplomatic Advisory Hub has been created.

## What is the Diplomatic Advisory Hub?

The Hub is a joint initiative between the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the British Chambers of Commerce.



Its aim is simple: to give UK businesses - especially small and medium-sized enterprises - access to diplomatic and geopolitical insight that helps them trade, invest and grow overseas.

Think of it as a front door into government geopolitical expertise and a feedback loop, so business experience feeds into policymaking.

Staffed by FCDO diplomats and led by a former Ambassador, the Hub focuses on what many firms tell us they need: clear, practical guidance on geopolitical risk, regulatory shifts and changing conditions in-market (including periods of instability). In other words, we translate complex politics into decisions you can act on.

The Hub is starting as a one-year pilot, and it will be shaped by the businesses that use it. Conversations with companies across the UK - including at recent events in Aberdeen - are already refining the offer, keeping it grounded, practical and business-led.

## Why does this matter in the North-east?

At a recent business breakfast in Aberdeen, the message was straightforward: global events can hit the bottom line fast. A geopolitical shock can move energy prices, reroute shipping, push up insurance costs or disrupt suppliers - sometimes overnight.

For many North-east companies, that volatility is one more reason to broaden horizons.

As reliance on the North Sea declines, more businesses in the energy supply chain are exploring overseas markets.

In that environment, political context, sanctions risk and regulatory direction aren't 'nice to know' - they're a source of competitive advantage.

The takeaway: firms that plan for disruption, diversify routes and suppliers, and keep delivering under pressure are the ones most likely to come out on top.

## What does the Hub's support look like in practice?

The Diplomatic Advisory Hub supports businesses through:

1. In-person outreach - meeting firms where they are, including at Chamber events.
2. Webinars focused on priority regions, sectors and live issues, drawing on FCDO insight from around the world.
3. One-to-one support, requested directly via the Hub's website.
4. Referrals to the right government or non-government support when the issue sits outside the Hub's core geopolitical remit.

And crucially, what we hear from businesses is fed back into government - so policy is informed by what's happening on the ground.

## Complementing a strong regional network

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has a proud track record of convening businesses,

championing the region and backing international ambition.

The Diplomatic Advisory Hub adds a diplomatic lens to that network - helping firms connect global politics to commercial reality, and make smarter calls about where to focus, when to move and what to watch.

Want to hear more, share feedback or put a question to the team? Use the 'Contact us' button on the Hub's website and we'll get back to you.



## Diplomatic Advisory Hub

Diplomatic insight for UK growth



Visit: [www.britishchambers.org.uk/diplomatic-advisory-hub](http://www.britishchambers.org.uk/diplomatic-advisory-hub)





# International Trade Services



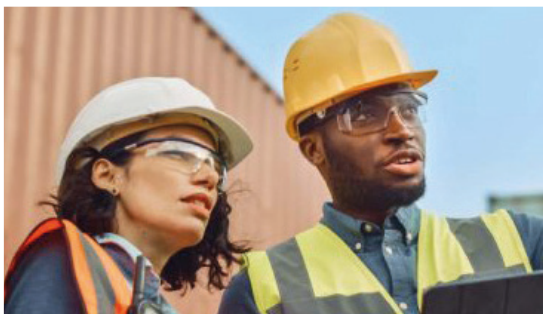
**Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce**



## Expand Your Global Reach with Confidence

At Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, we provide expert advice on all aspects of international trade, supporting your business as you explore and succeed in overseas markets.

Our dedicated Customs Declaration Service ensures your customs clearance is handled accurately and on time — helping you avoid costly delays and errors. Trust us to streamline your international operations and keep your business moving forward.



## Comprehensive Support for Your International Trade

We offer a wide range of services to meet your global trade requirements, ensuring smooth and compliant cross-border transactions:

- Certificates of Origin
- Preference Certificates
- Customs Brokerage Services
- ATA Carnets
- Legalisation of documents

Contact [documentation@agcc.co.uk](mailto:documentation@agcc.co.uk) to find out more

# Doubling down on diversification for Aberdeen's economy

**Author:** Bob Sanguinetti DL | CEO | Port of Aberdeen



**Aberdeen's economy has evolved through the ages and, for almost 900 years, Port of Aberdeen has been at the heart of it.**

In days gone by, textiles, shipbuilding, and fishing provided local prosperity and filled the national coffers. The city and its port have continually adapted as industries changed, and that matters now more than ever.

Oil and gas supports hundreds of thousands of jobs and generates billions in tax revenues for UK plc. We are living through an accelerated decline in this key sector, driven by policy not geology. While this situation cannot, and is not, being tolerated, it has sharpened the focus on diversification across the regional economy.

For Port of Aberdeen, that means two things: consolidating oil and gas activity and pursuing opportunities in new sectors. That includes attracting jack-up rigs, continued growth in cruise, handling cargo of a size, scale and variety not seen before in Aberdeen, and supporting a carefully managed energy transition.

Offshore wind is a generational opportunity for Scottish ports. However, activity at scale across the sector remains frustratingly out of reach as many ScotWind and INTOG projects make slow progress. Urgent action is required to accelerate planning, consenting and grid connections, and reduce transmission charges. Without this, projects could be stranded and the supply chain benefit will not materialise.

But diversification isn't just waiting for one major opportunity to land. It's about using our infrastructure and capabilities to unlock new opportunities, often in established sectors.

Tourism is one example. Analysis published in May 2025 showed the economic impact of tourism in Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire increased to £1.27billion in 2024, up 2% over 2023 as more visitors experienced the region's quality tourism and hospitality offering.

Supporting that growth trend in a modest but meaningful way is the cruise sector. While Aberdeen has welcomed cruise ships for many years, the development of South Harbour has helped put the region firmly on the cruise map. From 22 cruise calls with around 3,000 guests in 2022, we are set to welcome 75 calls and up to 57,000 guests this year.

A day ashore in the North-east offers visitors a wonderful 'taster' of the experiences waiting for them on a future visit. And every cruise ship that comes into Aberdeen brings a wealth of opportunity to showcase the Granite City and Aberdeenshire, boosting local traders and businesses.

For Jamieson & Carry, as one of many examples, this growing market is significant, with Partner Philip Carry commenting: "The growth of cruise tourism in Aberdeen is incredibly exciting. As an independent Aberdeen business, we recognise the vital role tourism plays in bringing people into the city centre and wider region, supporting the local economy."

Food and drink are another staple of the north-east economy, and our investment in South Harbour is creating new trade opportunities for local growers.

After a challenging growing season, Aberdeenshire farmers found themselves with a surplus of malting barley that did not meet whisky-

grade specifications and could not all be absorbed by the UK feed market.

We offered South Harbour as an export option and around 4,000 tonnes of malting barley left Aberdeen bound for Ireland.

For farmers that meant a port closer to home, and shorter runs for local hauliers. And for the port, it's another example of diversifying into new commodities and new markets.

This is what doubling down on diversification looks like in practice. It's a strategy that builds resilience and generates value across the economy to create prosperity for generations.

OPINION  
OPINION

# WORDS OF ADVICE



**Kevin Watt,**  
*Managing Director,*  
Kinetics Controls & Innovation (KCI)

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

At KCI, we help clients solve complex integrity and engineering challenges with honesty, care and real world expertise. We're a people first company, trusted to deliver safe, reliable solutions that protect critical infrastructure while supporting our clients' long term success.

## Tell us about your management style and how it has worked for you?

My style is open, calm and collaborative. I believe people

do their best work when they feel supported and listened to. I focus on giving clarity, removing barriers and trusting the team. This has built strong relationships, loyalty and a culture where people feel confident to speak up and grow.

## What is the biggest barrier you overcame in the workplace and how did you tackle it?

The biggest barrier was learning to lead through uncertainty. Instead of trying to control everything, I focused on clear communication, being honest about what we knew, and didn't know, and supporting people emotionally as well as professionally. That shift helped me build resilience and stronger teams.

## What's your top tip for someone joining your organisation today?

"Be kind, be curious, and follow through." It reminds me that relationships matter, learning never stops, and doing what you say builds trust, the foundation of any successful business.

## What's your top tip for someone joining your organisation today?

Ask questions, stay curious, and don't be afraid to contribute from day one. We value people who care, share ideas and look out for each other. You'll be supported, and you'll make an impact faster than you think.



**Nichola Crawford,**  
*Deputy Head (Pupil Wellbeing)*  
Albyn School

## Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Albyn School is a welcoming, inclusive school community in the heart of Aberdeen, offering

exceptional education from nursery through to S6. We combine high academic standards with genuine care, ensuring every pupil is supported to thrive - academically, socially and emotionally.

## Who are your customers?

Families across the North-east, with pupils joining us from as young as two-years-old in our Nursery, and progressing through to 18-years-old in our senior school.

## What is the biggest challenge and opportunity your organisation is facing right now?

A key challenge for all schools is supporting pupil wellbeing in an increasingly demanding and fast-paced world. This also presents an opportunity to strengthen our whole-school approach, equipping pupils with the resilience, confidence and

emotional skills needed to thrive both in school and beyond. Something Albyn School is renowned for.

## What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Prioritise wellbeing within your organisation—when people feel supported, they perform at their best. By fostering a positive, resilient culture, you not only strengthen your team but also build a sustainable foundation for long-term success.

## What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

It helps us build strong links with the local business community, creating meaningful opportunities for our pupils. It supports real-world learning, career insight and partnerships, ensuring young people are better prepared, more confident and ready to contribute to the workplace.

## Unique Group expands global subsea mechanical division with multi-million dollar investment

Unique Group, global leader in subsea technologies and engineering, has announced a multi-million-dollar investment to expand its Subsea Mechanical division globally, strengthening its capabilities across subsea decommissioning, installation and construction projects.

The investment reflects the company's continued evolution from its origins in survey rental to a broader subsea technology and engineering provider. The expanded mechanical portfolio supports an integrated delivery model combining survey, excavation, buoyancy, cutting, lifting and recovery services within a single framework.

A key element of the division's capability is the proprietary Uni-FlowX Controlled Mass Flow Excavation (CMFE) system. The system enables non-contact trenching, de-burial and controlled asset exposure, supporting both construction and late-life decommissioning scopes where seabed preparation is required prior to cutting or recovery.

## Work begins on new Luxe Scot and Premier Coaches depot

Premier Coaches and Luxe Scot have officially commenced development on their new depot, marking a significant milestone in the companies' long term growth strategy.

Groundworks and steel framework construction began at the start of May, signalling the transition from planning to tangible progress on site.

The project represents an investment of approximately £1.8million.

While the current economic climate - characterised by rising costs across construction, materials and operations - may seem an unusual time to embark on such a substantial venture, both companies view the move as a necessary and forward thinking step.

The new depot is intended to improve the firms' carbon footprint, strengthen operational efficiency, support fleet expansion and position the businesses more competitively for the future.

Financial Planning that puts you at the heart of your future



- Retirement Planning
- Savings & Investments
- Pension Advice
- Employee Benefits for Business

Independent Financial Advice is closer than you think.



# WORDS OF ADVICE



**Christina Dobbie,**  
*Visitor Centre Manager, Glen Garioch Distillery*

## **Give us the elevator pitch for your business.**

Glen Garioch Distillery is a small Highland distillery where tradition and quality drive everything we do. We have invested in restoring traditional production methods, including our floor maltings - now rare in Scotland - while using modern techniques, and our focus is on creating memorable and authentic whisky experiences for visitors.

## **Tell us about your management style and how it has worked for you?**

I am organised, direct and thoughtful in how I approach decisions. I like to set clear expectations and create

structure, while making space for people to contribute ideas. When people feel listened to and understand the reason behind decisions, they usually take greater pride in what they deliver.

## **What is the biggest barrier you overcame in the workplace and how did you tackle it?**

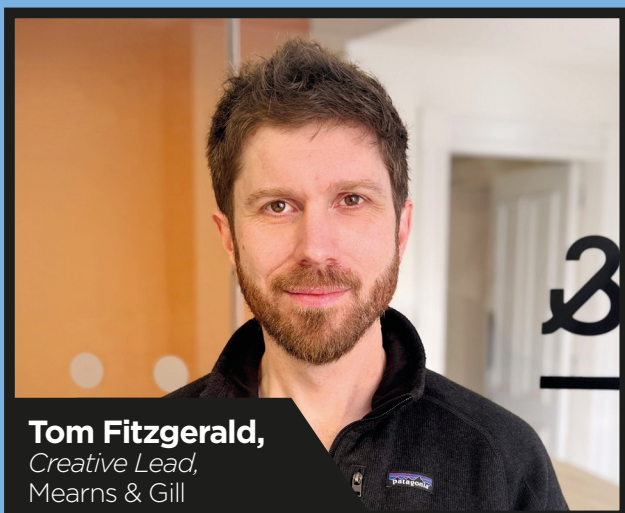
Balancing commercial demands with maintaining a high-quality visitor experience can be challenging. Clear priorities, strong planning and regular communication help keep standards high while allowing the team to stay adaptable during busy periods and without losing the personal touch visitors remember.

## **What's the best bit of business or life advice you've ever received?**

Be clear, be fair, and don't avoid difficult conversations. Most problems grow when they are left too long; handled early and respectfully, they usually become far easier to solve.

## **What's your top tip for someone joining your organisation today?**

Stay curious, ask questions and learn the detail behind the experience. Guests remember genuine enthusiasm, and small details often make the biggest difference.



**Tom Fitzgerald,**  
*Creative Lead,*  
*Mearns & Gill*

## **Give us the elevator pitch for your business.**

We're Scotland's oldest creative agency, founded in 1937. We solve problems through strategy-led brand, marketing, design and unforgettable events. Think of us as the bridge between your ambition and your audience, using strategic thinking and beautiful execution to create meaningful experiences and connections.

## **Tell us about your management style and how it has worked for you?**

Hire brilliant people, then get out of their way. My job as Creative Lead is to create the conditions for excellence: clear briefs, honest feedback, and removing obstacles. Micromanagement kills creativity and morale faster than any outside challenge.

## **What is the biggest barrier you overcame in the workplace and how did you tackle it?**

The perpetual tech treadmill. New tools emerge faster than our team can master them. It feels like a Sisyphian cycle of upskilling, but we tackled it by focusing on principles over platforms. Good creative and design thinking transcends software and tech trends. Once you understand the 'why', the 'how' becomes learnable.

## **What's the best bit of business or life advice you've ever received?**

See your clients as partners. The best work happens when you align with people who trust your expertise and challenge your thinking. These relationships don't just deliver great outcomes, they become referrals. Brilliant outcomes attract brilliant clients.



# Diversification key to resilient and balanced economy

By Danny McKay

**A new independent report has mapped out a Regional Economic Strategy for Aberdeen with a focus on diversification to support a resilient and balanced economy.**

The 2026 Economic Policy Panel Report makes nine recommendations and highlights a need to diversify to bolster resilience, with recent and ongoing investments in tourism infrastructure, digital connectivity, hospitality, science facilities, and energy transition projects all moves in the right direction.

The Aberdeen Economic Policy Panel was started in 2017 to provide an independent review of the performance of the North-east economy.

The Panel has been made up of professionals from industry, academia, and the public sector to assess the current economic position of the region, and the longer-term priorities that influence performance.

The report states the economic outlook for the region remains “fraught with uncertainty and challenges” driven by global and domestic factors.

It adds: “The region has faced a series of shocks, including the lingering effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical tensions, energy market volatility, and economic policy uncertainties. The combination of these factors serves to further underline the significant structural economic challenges that the region faces.

“The nature and scale of these challenges require that policy should remain focused on the long-term factors that underpin sustainable economic prosperity and productivity improvements, and the strategic regional actions that provide opportunities for growth.

“Key to this long-term success will be economic diversification both within the energy sector and outside it to produce greater economic resilience.

“This must be supported by further progress on developing foundational elements like skills, infrastructure, innovation and the natural environment, enhancing the region’s attractiveness as a place to live and invest.

“The Panel continues to focus on these themes, informed by discussions with stakeholders and business leaders, to encourage sustainable productivity-led economic growth for the North-east.

“The 2026 set of recommendations build on the progress made on the Panel’s previous recommendations and with regard to the analysis in this report set out what is needed to help achieve long-term success.”

Read the report and the nine recommendations in full by scanning the QR code.



This report highlights the vital role that diversification – both within the energy sector and outside it – has in building a more resilient and balanced economy for the future.

It states: “The current sectoral approach to diversification set out in the RES was established in the original regional economic strategy in 2016 and it is vital that the approach continues to focus on sectors where the region has a competitive advantage and ability to build on strong foundations.

“The many economic changes that have occurred over this period mean that the setting out of the action plan for the RES provides an ideal opportunity to include a full review of the sectoral approach in 2026.

“This can assess existing and other potential growth sectors against clear criteria that ensure it is focusing on the sectors where the region has the underlying strengths,

skills, investment and opportunity to deliver significant economic impact.”

The report also highlights the key role recent and continuing infrastructure investment has in ensuring the successful transition of the regional economy.

Noting progress in the development of an infrastructure investment plan covering both public and private funding, the document adds:

“The Panel encourages further progress in 2026 to ensure that this prioritises the key investment requirements to underpin Aberdeen’s vision and liveability, appraises options, sets out funding opportunities and clear timescales.

“This requires a new regional investment model capable of pooling and leveraging funding from the many sources across the public and private sectors that should be an integral part of the new model for the Regional Economic Partnership.

Continuing and increasing uncertainty around UK policy on oil and gas has led to accelerated decline in activity and job losses, moving out of sync with the development of new opportunities through renewable energy.



The report states: “There is an urgent need for a coherent plan for energy transition in the UK with realistic timescales and in keeping with UK Climate Change Committee advice. The Panel urges cross-government working - particularly between the UK and Scottish Governments - to deliver a more certain and managed just transition that delivers both our net zero targets and new economic opportunities in the region.”

Continuing progress on the Aberdeen City Centre and Beach Masterplan is another point on the report’s list of recommendations.

It adds: “It is vital that the development of the Local Development Plan for 2028 which is underway gives the necessary emphasis to the scale of economic transition needed across the city.

“Land use and planning has to be at the centre of that transition and ensure coordination across industrial, infrastructure and housing developments.”



The Panel warns, however, that the process of accessing funding associated with the North-east being designated an investment zone is lengthy, meaning the main benefits are still to be unlocked.

Guards should also be in place to prevent funding supporting activity that would have happened anyway or displaces activity from elsewhere.

The report adds: “It is clear that access to more funding and in particular from the private sector will be necessary for the city to achieve its ambitions.”



# SPOOLING EXPERIENCE, RELIABILITY & ATTENTION TO DETAIL

Over the past eight years, we have spooled an average of 65 kilometres of product per year. A total of 455 kilometres across more than 230 projects.



## TEST BAY

A fully configurable test bay with HGV and crane access



## HYDRAULIC DRIVE SPOOLER

75-tonne hydraulic drive spooler



## BACK TENSION SPOOLING WINCH

Back tension winch with real-time data logging



WE'VE BEEN SOLVING  
MECHANICAL CHALLENGES  
FOR OVER 30 YEARS.

+44 (0)1467 633805  
info@brimmond.com





**Ross Skene**  
*Business Development Manager*  
NEREC Ltd

### **Describe your early career path.**

I started in hospitality and retail, which built my confidence and taught me how to communicate with customers in fast-paced environments.

From there, I moved into business development, where I developed commercial awareness, relationship-building skills, and a strong understanding of client needs.

### **How did you arrive in your current industry?**

While I didn't come from a cleaning background, my previous role involved working closely with facility and operations managers.

That exposure helped me understand the challenges they face, which translated naturally into NEREC's industrial and commercial services.

### **What's the best thing about your job?**

The variety.

No two days are the same, and I enjoy helping clients solve real, practical problems.

### **What has been your biggest career challenge or proudest achievement?**

Overcoming imposter syndrome.

Learning to trust that I'm in this role for a reason has been a big personal milestone.

MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY  
MY CAREER JOURNEY



## **In partnership with**



### **What advice would you give your 18-year-old self?**

Trust the process.

You're not behind.

Your path doesn't need to look like anyone else's.

### **What's something surprising that most people wouldn't know about your job?**

Business development isn't just coffees and handshakes.

It often means site visits, climbing onto roofs, and getting a bit dirty to properly understand a job.

### **What does the future look like for you?**

I try not to overthink it.

I want to keep developing my skills and help grow NEREC into an even bigger success.

### **How do you unwind in your time off?**

Hiking in the Scottish hills, I enjoy the solitude and physical challenge.

### **What did you want to be when you were little?**

A police officer, I've always wanted to help people.

### **What was your first job?**

Paper boy.

# MOTOR MOUTH

**Some cars make a big impression the moment you lay eyes on them, whilst others need more time (and miles) to win you over. The KGM Actyon sits somewhere in the middle for me and, after a full weekend with it, I came away thinking it's a likeable and practical SUV.**

I should caveat that I don't have direct experience with the Actyon's rivals like the Kia Sportage, Nissan Qashqai or Volkswagen Tiguan. So rather than a clinical comparison, I have done my best to describe how the vehicle was to live with over a typical weekend. The car arrived on Friday afternoon and I put it straight to good use, driving from Aberdeen to Stonehaven for fish and chips and a beach walk with my wife and dog. It felt suited to that kind of relaxed trip: comfortable, quiet, and plenty of space.

The following day saw a 140-mile round trip to see my parents in Dundee, which gave an ideal opportunity for a reasonable motorway drive, whilst Sunday was reserved for a short trip to my office.

First impressions are very strong. The Actyon from KGM (formerly SsangYong), is billed as a coupe-SUV, which feels ambitious, but it's an undeniably attractive vehicle. My test car had a large QR code livery on the back, and I noticed quite a few passers by pointing their phones toward the car over the weekend. The best way to describe its looks is 'curious', the sort of car you might glance back at, to check you still agree with your first impression. Inside the cabin, the twin 12.3-inch screens give it a modern feel, and space is excellent, especially in the back,

**GREAT  
FAMILY CAR  
WITH SPACE,  
COMFORT, AND  
A HIGH LEVEL  
OF KIT**

By Steve Harris, Founder and Managing Director of Integrity QHSE.

where passengers won't be short on legroom. The back seats fold all the way down, which is a functional bonus, especially when the boot is as huge as it is, easily swallowing a full weekend's worth of life without complaint.

On the road, the Actyon has a confident presence, and is best described as relaxed. The 1.5-litre petrol engine is capable enough, but won't set your world on fire. I drove in the 'comfort' setting and I found the auto gearbox overly hesitant, and the suspension is too tight and struggles on our rough Aberdeen roads. Living rurally, this really stood out. It doesn't feel unsafe or unstable, just not reassuring in challenging conditions. Where this vehicle does score highly is equipment. Heated and ventilated seats, a heated steering wheel, adaptive cruise control, and a 360-degree camera to name just a few. There were also so many chimes and 'dings' that I know the car is laden with sensors, I just didn't have the time to investigate them. I also looked at the warranty - exceptional.

In summary, the Actyon is spacious, comfortable, and well-equipped, but still needs refinement. Ride quality, fuel economy, and interior finishes hold it back. It would be a great family car with space, comfort, and a high level of kit. But, if efficiency, driving dynamics, and all-weather confidence are priorities, there might be stronger alternatives. Overall, I'd cautiously recommend this car. It's a solid, likeable SUV with plenty going on.



# SO MUCH MORE THAN A RUGGED WORKHORSE

By James Bream, CEO, Katoni Engineering

**The KGM Rexton had been labelled to me as a workhorse, rugged and a value SUV but the truth is it brings so much more, so let me tell you.**

Friday arrives, and the guys from Torphins Station Garage arrive in Westhill. I see the car coming, it is a beast, not thin but certainly muscular. Raymond gives me a thorough run through of the controls and the keys are mine. If that process was an insight into service from Station Garage, then I'll be a future customer.

Friday night, I drive home and without mentioning speed I find myself cruising at a decent pace.

The phrase workhorse gives a feeling of a tractor like experience, but this vehicle drives like a car.

The seating position feels low for such a large vehicle, it handles well around roundabouts, and it is brilliantly relaxing on the dueller.

Saturday we are into Pittodrie, whole family in the car and there is loads of space.

The 4WD allows me to reverse onto a bank and park with ease, we return with no ticket and get home without fuss.

Sunday, a wee test across some hills and dales before I take out a competitive field in the Kintore Spring Open.

The clubs don't even register as luggage and the car also handled great across the backroad from Hatton of Fintray and then onto Cormack Park and back home.

The car was brilliant, smooth, handles well for a big vehicle, is mega comfy and has decent pace which was surprising and would be amazing for a big family on a road trip. Thanks team Station Garage.



# REXTON

from £42,615

Available at Station Garage Torphins  
Craigour Road, AB31 4UE





# DEVELOP YOUR WORKFORCE WITH CHAMBER TRAINING

## Overcoming imposter syndrome and building confidence

Imposter syndrome can hold people back, affecting performance, decision-making and wellbeing – even in high-achieving teams. Our interactive course helps participants understand what imposter syndrome is, why it develops and how it shows up in the workplace.

Delegates will learn to recognise personal triggers, identify unhelpful patterns and behaviours, challenge unrealistic internal expectations and develop practical strategies to manage self-doubt. With a strong focus on real workplace situations, participants leave with tools they can apply immediately to build confidence and perform under pressure.



*View all our management and leadership courses*

*'Imposter syndrome goes beyond confidence or performance. It is shaped by how people define competence, how they see themselves and the patterns they fall into when their sense of belonging is uncertain'*

## MEET THE TRAINER: NARA MORRISON

Nara Morrison is a psychotherapist and a trainer specialising in imposter syndrome and its impact on performance, stress and burnout. She works with professionals and organisations to address the internal patterns that shape decision-making, confidence and how people show up in their roles.

Her background combines psychological training with practical experience across different sectors. This allows her to bring both depth and real-world experience into every session. Her work focuses on the impact of imposter syndrome on individuals and organisations and addresses issues from overworking and perfectionism to hesitation, avoidance, reduced contribution, lost productivity and lack of growth.

Nara's sessions are interactive and grounded in real workplace situations. She creates space for reflection and helps participants understand their own patterns and respond more effectively under pressure. Her work highlights the often-unseen impact of imposter syndrome on communication, well-being, and retention. As a result, participants leave with practical ways to navigate these challenges in their roles.



# TAILORED TRAINING THAT FITS YOUR BUSINESS

Need training that works for your people, your culture or even your time zones? Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce delivers fully bespoke courses designed around your business needs – led by our top-rated trainers.

Whether it's a leadership programme supporting teams across the UK, UAE, Malaysia and the Americas, or cross-cultural communication training delivered online to 200+ global delegates, we create solutions that are practical, engaging and aligned to your business goals.

With flexible delivery options and tailored content, we help organisations build stronger leaders, more connected teams and high-performing workplace cultures.

Build your tailored course today, speak to our team now:

*training@agcc.co.uk/*  
*01224 343900*



**CHAMBER MEMBERS GET  
33% DISCOUNT ON ALL OUR  
OPEN COURSES AND UP TO  
45% DISCOUNT ON TAILORED  
SOLUTIONS!**



*Download our training  
brochure*



# BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



**Andrew Alleway,**  
*Founder and CEO,*  
Tidy Green Clean

## **Who or what has been the biggest influence on your career?**

Without question, my father. He was an entrepreneur from a young age and growing up I saw first-hand both the rewards and the challenges of running a business. That early exposure gave me a realistic understanding of what it takes to succeed, particularly the work ethic, resilience and accountability required to make a business thrive. His example shaped my attitude to leadership and responsibility.

## **What's the most effective piece of training or personal development you have undertaken?**

A recent full-day session with Brad Sugars of Action COACH stands out. Six business owners shared the room, and I left with over 20 pages of practical notes. It challenged me to rethink how we adapt, remain market leaders and embrace technology at Tidy Green Clean. It was intense, focused and immediately actionable.

## **What's the biggest lesson you have learned in business?**

Not everything goes to plan. No matter how well prepared you are, circumstances change. The key lesson has been to stay adaptable and solution focused. There is always a Plan B...and often a Plan C or D. Make the most of what you have, keep moving forward and don't be afraid to "crash forward" when necessary.

## **What's been your proudest career achievement to date?**

Completing a management buyout (MBO) and bringing the team into the ownership of the business is my proudest achievement. Tidy Green Clean has been shaped by the people within it and giving them the opportunity to share in its future success felt like the right and responsible step. It strengthened our culture and reinforced that we are building something together.

## **What's the best thing about doing business in the North-east of Scotland?**

The people. As a Kiwi, I have found the North-east of Scotland to be

full of genuine, straightforward and welcoming individuals. There is a strong sense of community and resilience here, and that makes doing business both rewarding and enjoyable. I have felt very much at home.

## **What was your first job?**

Paperboy, in my father's company, delivering the many paper routes no one else wanted, it created income and taught me the value of work.

## **Who or what inspires you most?**

My family; they drive me every day to create, improve and succeed for them.

## **What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?**

"Circle back" - why circle back, let's deal with it and move on.

## **How do you relax?**

Time with family at our place in Findhorn and a round of golf, though golf is not always relaxing!

## **If you had the power to change one thing in the world, what would it be?**

Greater collective commitment to protecting our environment and planet.

## QUICK-FIRE ROUND



## Setting the standard for private GP care in Aberdeen

- Easy online & phone booking
- Experienced local GPs
- Extensive tests & services
- Affordable, transparent pricing
- OEUK, HGV, Taxi Medicals
- Preventative health screening

**Private GP appointments from £50**

45 Queens Road  
Aberdeen  
AB15 4ZN

01224 044979

[www.abergp.co.uk](http://www.abergp.co.uk)

## Tidy Green Clean launches new construction and lettings cleaning services

Tidy Green Clean is excited to announce the expansion of its services with the introduction of two new specialist sectors: Construction Cleaning and Letting Agent Cleaning. This marks a significant step forward as the business continues to grow and support a broader range of clients with the same trusted, high-quality service.

Construction environments demand more than just a basic clean, they require a service that understands safety, presentation, and the fast-moving nature of projects. That's exactly what TGC now delivers through its dedicated Construction Cleaning service.

From busy site offices and welfare facilities to pristine show homes and final handovers, the team works alongside contractors to keep spaces clean, compliant, and ready for use.

With a strong focus on health and safety and a commitment to recognised industry standards, every clean is carried out with care, precision, and professionalism.

Whether it's ongoing support throughout a build or a detailed deep clean at completion, clients can rely on a flexible, responsive service that helps projects run smoothly and leaves a lasting impression.

In the fast-paced world of property lettings, timing and presentation are everything. TGC's new Letting Agent Cleaning service is designed to make property turnaround simpler, quicker, and more reliable.

Working with letting agents, landlords, and property managers, the team ensures every property is cleaned to a high standard and ready for its next tenant or use. From apartments and houses to commercial spaces, the service is built around consistency, attention to detail, and the ability to meet tight deadlines.

These new sectors are a natural progression for TGC, building on its reputation for dependable service and strong client relationships. By expanding into construction and lettings, the company is making it even easier for businesses and property professionals to access cleaning solutions they can trust.





**Jay O'Brien and Gail Woodcock**

NHS Grampian has appointed Jay O'Brien and Gail Woodcock as Executive Directors, signalling a further important step forward when it comes to stabilising the organisation.



**Craig Yeoman**

Aberdeen-based engineering specialist Brimmond has promoted Craig Yeoman to Finance Director and appointed him to the company's Board of Directors as the business celebrates its 30th anniversary.



**Kristen Rossvoll**

Aberdeen-based charity All Life Chances has appointed experienced banking professional Kristen Rossvoll to its board of trustees, further strengthening its leadership.



**Helen Rush**

Ann McRobb Associates has announced continued growth with the appointment of Helen Rush as an Associate, strengthening its expertise in a variety of sectors.



**Rebecca Harrison**

Munro's Travel has welcomed Rebecca Harrison as its new Marketing Executive, joining the business at a dynamic and fast-moving period of growth.



**Barry Carruthers**

Leading energy and infrastructure solutions provider, Global, has appointed Barry Carruthers as Chief Strategy Officer as the Group continues to grow its presence in the energy sector.



**Dave McGinn**

Redsquad has appointed Dave McGinn as Chairman, marking a significant step in the company's journey to build a £250million+ technology services group.



**Nic Heslop**

Aberdeen Football Club has appointed Nic Heslop as its new Commercial Director. Nic brings over 15 years' experience in senior commercial roles, including a lengthy spell at Cardiff City.



**Laurie Watson**

Royal Aberdeen Golf Club has appointed Laurie Watson as its new General Manager, marking a significant leadership addition as the Club looks ahead to its 250th anniversary.



**Tricia Walker and Greg Quinn**

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has appointed two non-executive directors to the board, Tricia Walker and Greg Quinn.



**Leigh Daniel and Daniella Karpenko**

D.J. Alexander has made two significant promotions within its Aberdeen team, reflecting the continued growth of the business and the strong performance of its local staff.



**Jennifer Shanks and Peter Cross**

Nexus Group has appointed Jennifer Shanks as Group Head of Marketing & Communications and Peter Cross as Head of Business Development & Sales as the business continues to strengthen its capabilities.



Executive Search | Interim Executives | Leadership Development

T 01224 327 016

[tmmexecutive.com](http://tmmexecutive.com)



**Mike Ewen**

Odfjell Technology has appointed Mike Ewen as its new QHSE Manager for the UK on an interim basis. Mike brings 37 years of experience in the UK oil and gas industry to his new role.



**Ryan Openshaw**

International law firm Addleshaw Goddard has promoted Ryan Openshaw to Partner in Scotland. Ryan has more than a decade of experience practising in Aberdeen, dealing with complex commercial and contractual disputes.



**Gathimba Edwards Foundation**

Gathimba Edwards Foundation (GEF) has established a new Fundraising Advisory Board to support its long-term fundraising strategy as demand for its services continues to grow.



**Lewis Hawick**

Aberdeen-based managed IT provider Simblox has welcomed Lewis Hawick as Systems Engineer First Line, further strengthening its technical support team.



**Laura Main**

Star of stage and screen Laura Main has been announced as the new patron of Aberdeen Arts Centre to support the grassroots arts venue during the ongoing Save Aberdeen Arts Centre fundraising campaign.



**Global Gases UK**

Leading independent packaged gas supplier Global Gases Group has announced a series of strategic appointments to its Global Gases UK Ltd team, supporting continued business growth.



### Jennifer Heiton

Port of Aberdeen has appointed Jennifer Heiton as Chief Financial Officer. Jennifer brings 23 years of experience across corporate financial advisory and CFO roles.



### Euan Pirie

Aberdeen-based technology firm Dax Group has appointed Euan Pirie as a software developer as it continues to invest in its local team.



### Brian McMurray

The Aberdeen office of top 10 accountancy and business advisory firm Azets has strengthened its senior leadership team with the appointment of Brian McMurray as Partner.



### Teresa Gilligan

Johnston Carmichael has strengthened its audit offering in Aberdeen with the appointment of Teresa Gilligan as Audit Director to support the firm's continued investment in the North-east.



### Alex Cormier

Clairvynt AI, an Aberdeen-based company that builds AI tools for the energy sector, has appointed Alex Cormier as Product Manager.



REACH FOR THE CROWN



THE DATEJUST

*Jamieson & Carry*

142 UNION STREET, ABERDEEN AB10 1GF



**ROLEX**

WATCH FEATURED SUBJECT TO STOCK AVAILABILITY