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BUSINESS BULLETIN

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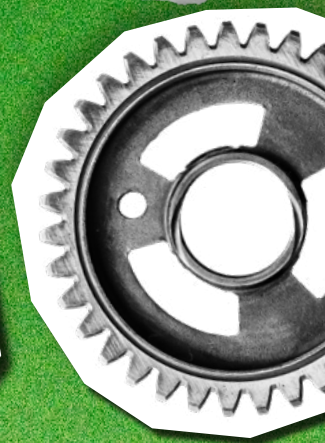
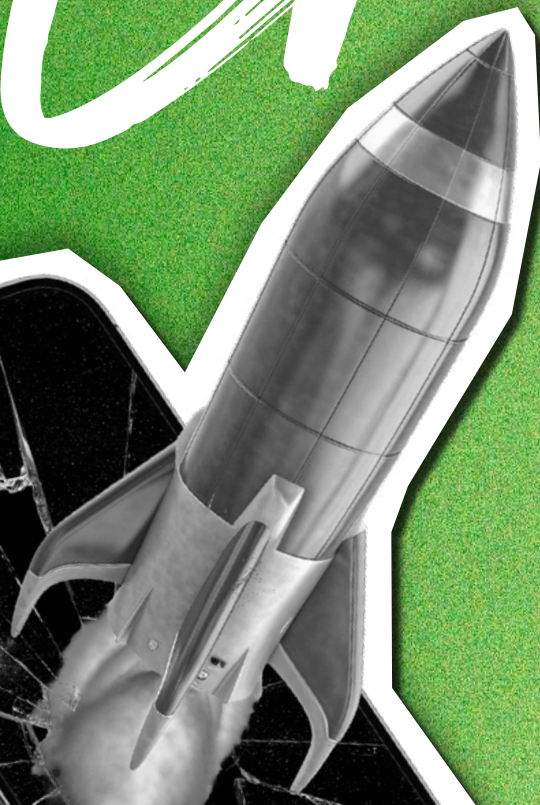
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When great people make great things happen



Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Every now and again, you get one of those nights that reminds you exactly why you do what you do. Last month in London was one of them.

Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce was named UK Chamber of the Year by the British Chambers of Commerce - a huge honour and a moment of pride for our entire team, our members, and the North-east business community we serve.

To make it even better, our very own Katie Watson picked up the Rising Star Award, beating peers from across the UK. A double win for Aberdeen.

The last time AGCC won that national award was 2014, the year Dons lifted the League Cup. Eleven years later, we've brought home the Scottish Cup and the Chamber of the Year trophy in the same season.

The trip down to London was memorable from the moment it began. We travelled on the LNER first-class service, where the team - and in particular Jonnie and Zoe - looked after us superbly. Their warmth and professionalism set the tone for the whole journey. It's easy to underestimate the power of great service, but when you experience it, you realise it's people who make the biggest difference.

That was a fitting start to a trip that would celebrate exactly that - people, teamwork and culture.

Because make no mistake, this award wasn't won in a single night in London. It's the culmination of years of effort, collaboration, and shared belief in what this Chamber can achieve.

The judges recognised AGCC for its high-impact campaigning - particularly around a managed energy transition that protects jobs and communities - and our extensive work with Chambers across the UK. But what they were really recognising was a team that cares deeply about its region and the businesses within it.

At its heart, a Chamber of Commerce is about people helping people. We're here to connect, support and champion the business community - and that's only possible because of the people behind the scenes. The AGCC team is small but mighty, and this award belongs to every one of them. From our membership, international documentation and policy teams to our events, communications, research and training staff, it's their creativity, energy and care that make this Chamber special.

That spirit of learning and development runs through everything we do. We've just relaunched our training offering, with a refreshed programme designed to help local businesses invest in their people - whether it's leadership, digital skills, sales or wellbeing.

Our new courses reflect what members have told us they need most: practical, high-impact learning that helps teams grow and organisations thrive. Because when people develop, businesses succeed - and our region prospers.

One of the most rewarding parts of this job is seeing young professionals like Katie Watson flourish. Her Rising Star Award is a reflection not only of her own talent and dedication, but of a workplace culture that encourages people to take ownership, share ideas and grow.

Katie's enthusiasm and drive have made her a role model for others, both inside and outside our organisation. She's part of the next generation of Chamber leaders - and that gives me real confidence for the future.

Of course, no Chamber can succeed without its members. The North-east business community has always punched above its weight - ambitious, innovative and unafraid to speak up for what it believes in.

Their support for our North Sea Transition Taskforce campaign helped put energy policy and regional opportunity on the national agenda. Together, we're making sure the transition to net zero is done in a way that safeguards thousands of jobs and keeps the UK's energy heart beating strongly.

So, as I stood on that stage in London, I didn't just feel proud of a trophy. I felt proud of a team that shows up every day with purpose. Proud of a membership that stands shoulder to shoulder with us. Proud of a region that continues to lead, innovate and adapt.

Awards are wonderful - they give us a moment to pause, reflect and celebrate. But what really matters is the culture that makes success possible. At AGCC, that culture is built on teamwork, trust, and a shared belief that we can make this region the best place in the UK to do business.

Winning Chamber of the Year is an incredible milestone - but it's also a reminder of what's next. Because when you're surrounded by great people, you never stop wanting to make great things happen.


Russell Borthwick
Chief Executive



"Hands off, boys"



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!



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Tenth anniversary marked with leadership evolution

In line with long-term strategic goals and the company's unrelenting commitment to international operational excellence, Andrew Robins has become Chief Executive Officer with company founder Andrew Polson to remain in the role of Chairman. John Duncan steps into the role of Chief Technical Officer and Iain Frater has joined the business as Chief Operating Officer. Darren Bragg, who relocated to Dubai, UAE in 2023, returns to the UK, to take up a new position of Chief Commercial Officer.

Darren's regional responsibilities have been taken on by Nick Glennie who has been hired as EnerQuip's new Abu Dhabi-based regional manager for the Middle East where contracts worth \$10m have been secured this year alone. In addition to capital equipment sales, the company is also punching high in maintenance and servicing work, which is proving to be a prime area for growth. Anticipated future strengthening in volume is likely to prompt the need for additional members of staff, including the technical team in the Middle East and further investment in regional resources and inventory.

One star performer in the Middle East is EnerQuip's revolutionary Mobile Torque Unit (MTU) which performs fully automated rig-side operations and positively disrupts incumbent methods by reducing labour requirements and carbon emissions whilst boosting efficiency and improving safety by reducing hands-on time by 50-60%. Also central to international success for the Aberdeenshire-headquartered business is the flagship Fully Rotational (FR) torque machine which makes up 50% of overseas trade and allows fast, accurate makeup and breakout of premium threaded connections. The business expects a near 100% level of export of product for 2025.

Further boosting growth in the Middle East was the acquisition of the AMC product line from Forum Energy Technologies, taking ownership of the intellectual property, people and assets in a move which further consolidated its market leading position and brought on board additional products which continue to help fulfil adventurous growth plans. Multi award-winning torque specialist EnerQuip is celebrating its landmark tenth anniversary by announcing a significant evolution in its leadership. The ambitious company prides itself on delivering flexible solutions backed by the best in the business: the team is light on its feet when it comes to giving customers what they want, where and when they want it – and they're in increasing demand, not only in the Middle East but in all four corners of the globe. Strategically placed service centres across the globe ensure prime positioning to exceed the expectations of the energy industry in mature and developing markets.

Founded in 2015, privately owned and with its global headquarters in Aberdeenshire, EnerQuip has blossomed from a specialist start-up to an international partner of choice built on knowledge and expertise grown in the North east of Scotland and delivered to the world with passion, skill and commitment.

In just ten years, the company has established operations in key global hubs, and its sustainable growth is underpinned by a reputation for technical expertise, service reliability and an unwavering focus on safety and quality.

The company's global headquarters in Aberdeenshire and Caithness manufacturing facility, supported by worldwide service hubs, Tenth anniversary marked with leadership evolution 10 enable 24/7 client support, maintaining existing equipment or delivering new solutions to meet evolving industry regulations.

Commenting on the recent news, Andrew Robins said: **“Celebrating ten years of growth and success, and with the business continuing to expand into new markets and consolidate its presence in existing ones, it is important that we redefine our leadership structure to support future growth aspirations.”**

“To capitalise on recent momentum, particularly in international markets, we have realigned the team to ensure that we correctly tap into our wealth of individual skills to achieve collective growth as we prepare for the next phase of our corporate journey, as we continue to diversify organically and through acquisition.”



Welcome to the Chamber



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Sir Ian Wood secures ‘transformational’ £80million investment for North-east economy

Sir Ian Wood has pledged £40million from his family charity, The Wood Foundation, to accelerate economic diversification and the energy transition across North-east Scotland - a donation that will be match funded by the next Scottish Government.

The £80million total investment will support Opportunity North East (ONE) and ETZ Ltd, both chaired by Sir Ian, with £40million each to build on their work driving regional growth.

This latest £40million gift from Sir Ian builds on a long record of philanthropy that has seen more than £135million invested in the region, funding everything from STEM education and youth programmes to NHS infrastructure and charitable causes.

Sir Ian said: “I’m delighted that my family charity, The Wood Foundation, will make a long-term investment in two organisations that will continue to play a pivotal role in transforming North-east Scotland’s economy.

“There remains a great deal of work to do and I’m in the fortunate position of being able to help contribute to this region’s success through the support of The Wood Foundation.”

ONE was established in 2015 with a £64million funding commitment from The Wood Foundation and has since generated £135million of additional economic value, driving growth in digital tech, food, drink, agriculture and life sciences.

Its private sector model is set to double the size of the digital tech cluster, expand life sciences, and accelerate growth in food and drink, while ETZ Ltd — founded in 2021 — is spearheading the region’s energy transition to keep the North-east at the forefront of global energy excellence.

The latest £40million donation from Sir Ian brings his personal investment in ETZ and ONE alone to £104million.

First Minister John Swinney praised Sir Ian’s “utterly remarkable” philanthropic impact, saying it “continues to benefit thousands of people across Scotland and overseas.”

He confirmed his government would match fund the investment if re-elected, with Scottish Labour leader Anas Sarwar making the same pledge.

Mr Swinney said: “Sir Ian’s unwavering passion for his home city of Aberdeen, where he built one of the world’s largest energy services companies, inspired the creation of ONE and ETZ Ltd, two pioneering examples of how private-public partnership models can work effectively, creating sustainable economic opportunities for individuals, companies and sectors across North-east Scotland.”



OEUK shows how to boost UK economy by £137billion and safeguard 160,000 jobs

Offshore Energies UK (OEUK) has set out plans to deliver a £137billion economic boost and safeguard 160,000 jobs, calling on Chancellor Rachel Reeves to use the Autumn Budget to reform the windfall tax.

The leading trade body for the UK's offshore energy sector has said it will accept Treasury proposals for a reformed permanent profits-based mechanism if the changes are delivered in 2026.

OEUK wants the reform brought forward to 2026 to halt decline, protect jobs and restore investor confidence through a new blueprint shared with ministers.

The organisation warns that time is running out to stem a slow erosion of industrial and supply chain capability, with companies saying that waiting until 2030 for reform would be too late to prevent lasting damage. Industry has thrashed out a proposal to put to the Chancellor which it says will unlock more spend, tax and jobs from the sector than current plans which could shut the North Sea down prematurely.

OEUK says early reform is essential to secure investment, safeguard jobs and strengthen the UK's homegrown energy future, arguing that the choice is not between growth and climate ambition but how to deliver both.

Under OEUK's formal proposals to government, over £40billion of new investment could deliver £137billion in economic value, supporting thousands of skilled jobs across the country and generating significant tax revenues for public services.

David Whitehouse, chief executive of Offshore Energies UK, said: "This is a crucial moment for securing the future of the North Sea and the UK's energy system.

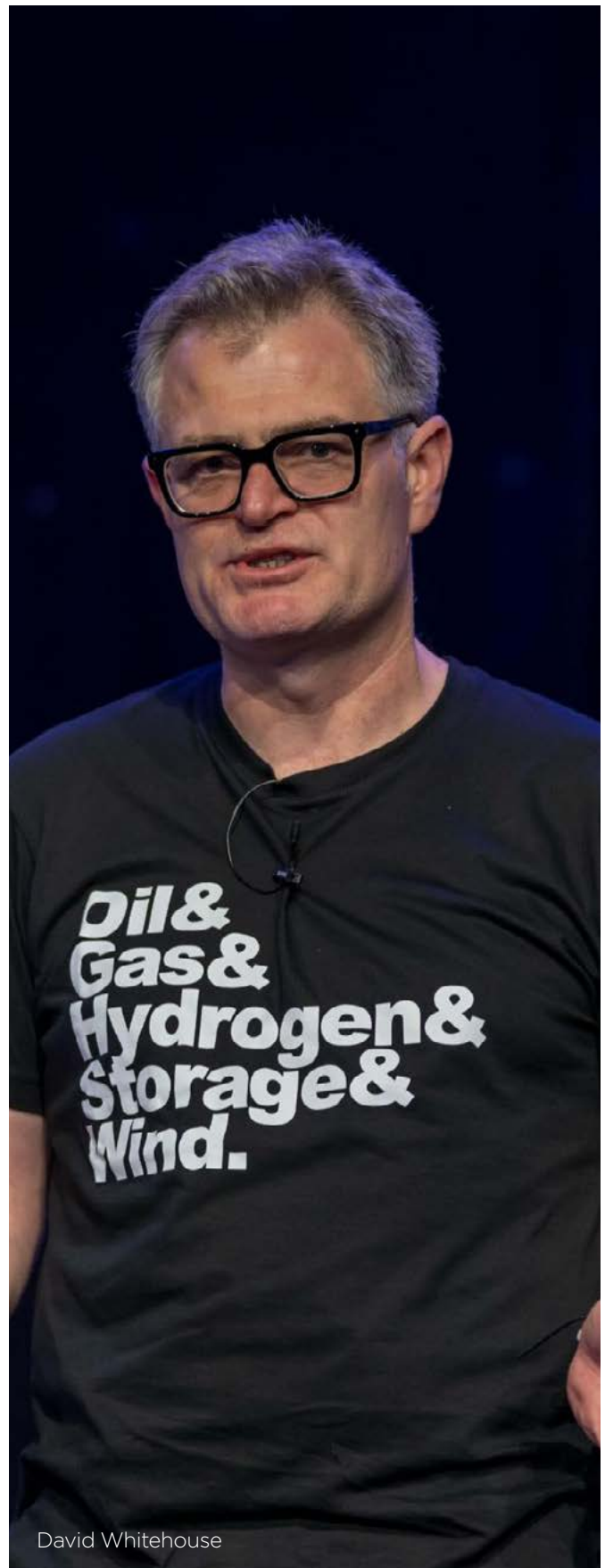
"Decisions made in the coming weeks will determine whether we keep investment and jobs here or lose them overseas.

"The windfall tax is costing jobs and investment and reducing the tax revenues that support families, communities and vital services across the UK.

"We have shown there is another path – one that restores confidence, secures long-term investment and anchors the skills and supply chain needed to deliver the UK's energy transition.

"We are asking the Chancellor to back our approach. In return, we will boost UK growth, tax revenue and jobs and underpin the UK's climate ambitions.

"This is about investing in homegrown energy over imports. This is about supporting communities and jobs."



David Whitehouse

50 years strong: The enduring legacy of a North Sea icon

Forged in steel and powered by people, the Forties Field has stood as a symbol of resilience and innovation for 50 years — providing the UK with energy since 1975.

November 3 marks half a century since Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II inaugurated the field at bp's Aberdeen headquarters.

Located 110 miles east of Aberdeen, it was the first major oil field discovery in the UK North Sea.

Comprising five platforms, Alpha, Bravo, Charlie, Delta, and Echo, which completed the field in 1986, the platforms rise from 350 feet of water, with wells drilled to depths of 7,000 feet.

One of the most iconic fields in the industry, it was a feat of remarkable engineering at the time, with the platforms constructed in Hartlepool and Nigg Bay in the Cromarty Firth.

In addition, a 107-mile underwater pipeline linked the platforms to Cruden Bay near Peterhead, with a further 130-mile pipeline transporting production to Grangemouth Refinery.

Each completed platform stood more than three times the height of London's Tower Bridge and contained 34,000 tonnes of steel — four times the amount used for the Eiffel Tower.

In its early years, the Forties welcomed many political, royal and celebrity visitors, including the late Princess Diana, His Majesty King Charles, numerous UK prime ministers, Cilla Black and Bucks

Fizz, who performed on The Russell Harty Show, broadcast from the Bravo and Charlie platforms.

The Forties holds its own celebrity status and will forever be renowned as a legend of the North Sea.

Apache purchased the field in 2003 and, through bold investment, innovation, technical expertise and sheer determination, the predicted field life has been extended for decades. Initially expected to be shut down for good in the early 2000s, the field is still producing today.

"When Apache entered the North Sea in 2003, we quickly earned a reputation as bold, fearless, and forward-thinking — a company unafraid to challenge convention and invest ambitiously in the future," said Greg McDaniel, senior vice president of international assets at Apache. "Today, the Forties Field continues to produce, standing as a lasting symbol of endurance and innovation."

"It is a true privilege to be part of the Forties story and to celebrate this remarkable 50-year milestone — a testament to the outstanding engineering of its time, and to the decades of dedication that have sustained it."



"Then, as now, our people are the driving force behind our success. We have the best team in the business, and we are all deeply honoured to be custodians of the Forties legacy."

Comprising 133 platform and six subsea wells, six topside platforms, and more than 270 kilometres of pipelines, the Forties field has produced roughly 2.86 billion barrels of oil between 1975 and 2025 to fuel the UK.

Still standing strong — a show of true Scottish grit and strength — the Forties Field at 50 remains a North Sea legend.



COLUMBIA

BP's first offshore platform, the Columbia, was the first of its kind in the world. It was a major milestone in the company's history, marking the beginning of its offshore operations. The platform was designed to operate in the harsh conditions of the North Sea, and it has since become a symbol of BP's commitment to innovation and safety in the oil and gas industry.



FORTIES

PROVIDING U.K. ENERGY
SINCE 1975

Policy above politics – a commonsense approach needed



As the UK's energy sector waits with bated breath for the Chancellor's Autumn Budget, and in particular its impact on current tax policies including the extended windfall tax, now is the time to think seriously about elevating policy beyond short-term party-political cycles.

Indications from last week's Labour Party Conference point to some sort of 'softening' in terms of oil and gas within the energy mix and there was also a promise of the long-awaited North Sea Strategy. But does that go far enough?

The Labour Party Conference, together with Offshore Europe set the context for a 'Leaders in Energy' roundtable dinner hosted by Johnston Carmichael in the boardroom of our Aberdeen Office. Alongside Mark Stewart, who leads Johnston Carmichael's energy, infrastructure and sustainability team, I facilitated discussions with key business leaders from across the energy sector, debating a broad range of topics.

In the last decade, we've had a revolving door of energy ministers and secretaries of state each bringing different priorities and philosophies. This lack of continuity is paralysing investment and leaving businesses uncertain. The creation of a new energy public private partnership (PPP) was the consensus of the action needed from participants representing ports and green free ports, carbon capture and storage (CCUS), offshore wind, communications and oil and gas.

Author: David Wilson, office managing partner at Johnston Carmichael Aberdeen and Mark Stewart, head of energy, infrastructure & sustainability

The Bank of England, an institution that sits above day-to-day politics and provides stability, is a proven model. Energy deserves the same treatment: a set of guiderails created jointly by government and industry, immune to political churn and designed to give investors and the public confidence in a long-term plan that covers all energy sources.

That certainty is particularly important for international investors. Middle and Far Eastern funds, looking at opportunities across the North of Scotland and Highlands and Islands, are weighing up billions in potential investment. Yet the lack of a clear national strategy and fiscal concerns are a significant deterrent.

Energy does not exist in isolation. Ports in Scotland are preparing to generate thousands of jobs from offshore wind and related industries. But the obvious question is: where will people live, how will they commute and where will they access essential services? Without a joined-up national infrastructure plan that includes roads, housing, schools and healthcare, the UK risks missing an opportunity to rebalance its economy and unlock regional growth.

We have seen before how public-private models can drive large-scale development when built on long-term certainty. What is missing now is not the appetite but the alignment.

Norway is frequently cited as an example of long-term planning done well. Its 78% tax rate on oil and gas profits has not driven investment away but channeled revenues into a sovereign wealth fund, electrification and infrastructure. Today, Norway generates nearly 90% of its electricity from hydro power, has achieved 95% EV uptake, exports its oil and gas and enjoys broad societal support for its tax model because the benefits are visible.

Contrast this with the UK, where the energy profits levy is seen as punitive, revenues are used to plug short-term fiscal holes, and the grid remains unfit for purpose to the extent that we pay wind farms not to generate power.

Through a global lens, the UK contributes less than 1% of worldwide CO₂ emissions, while China, India and the US together account for over 50%. Even if we hit net zero tomorrow, the planetary impact would be marginal. That does not absolve us of responsibility - since 1990 the UK has cut emissions by over 50%, and there are times where up to 90% of Scotland's electricity comes from low-carbon sources. But it does mean that our strategy must be realistic, economically sound and globally integrated.

OPINION
OPINION

As Professor Dieter Helm has pointed out, 29 COP summits later, the world is still around 80% reliant on fossil fuels. Meanwhile, global energy demand is set to rise sharply, driven in part by energy-intensive data centres powering the growth of artificial intelligence. Unless we tackle the global dimension, national policies risk being symbolic rather than effective.

Oil and gas will remain part of our energy mix for decades to come.

The transition from the Stone Age to the Bronze Age did not eliminate the use of stone. The same will be true of hydrocarbons. The question is one of balance and support for the UK oil and gas industry whilst investing in properly scaling renewables, hydrogen, CCUS and nuclear.

The sector is looking for government to take a pragmatic and much longer-term approach.

That means scrapping arbitrary net zero dates and focusing instead on the fundamentals: building a grid capable of integrating renewables; lowering bills through reforms such as decoupling marginal gas pricing; developing a hydrogen network linked to ScotWind and freeports in the North and importantly creating a national infrastructure plan that integrates energy, housing, transport and skills.

Establishing a public-private framework that transcends politics and fosters investor confidence could be the driver of momentum so urgently required to tackle these big issues. We need a commonsense approach to ensure energy is secure and sustainable while also driving economic growth.

All businesses are facing growing demands from regulators, investors, employees and consumers to disclose their sustainability credentials and this will only be enhanced when mandatory sustainability legislation is introduced into the UK in the next few years. At Johnston Carmichael we are committed to integrating sustainability into our practice and recently published our 2025 Sustainability report. We are also providing advice to our clients on sustainability reporting and assurance.

Our roundtable participants had the appetite, ideas and willingness to invest and agreed that with greater certainty, the UK has the chance to not only secure its energy future but prove that sustainability and profitability can go hand in hand.



BOSS
Mark Stewart
**JOHNSTON
CARMICHAEL**



the MEMBER MEET the



Jamie Watt,
Director,
Adaptive Surveys

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Adaptive Surveys provides utility, land and measured building surveys for the architectural, engineering and construction industries. We are regulated by RICS and pride ourselves on producing accurate survey data in

almost any environment using the latest technology. We survey the infrastructure beneath your feet, to the topography of mountains, and everything in between!

Who are your customers?

We typically work with design teams and developers in a variety of industries including renewables, civil engineering and architecture with quite a wide geographic spread. Our Resi+ service is built with architects in mind and produces high-accuracy 3D models for the residential conversion market whilst our PAS128 surveys help designers map utility infrastructure.

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

The company is growing, which is great, but it also introduces new learning opportunities and challenges daily. It might be something as simple as finding a

management tool to oversee multiple survey teams or more complex such as designing a laser scanning system to survey a viaduct for a new client. We're continually learning which keeps us on our toes.

What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Harness the training opportunities! There are some great courses available ranging from HR to accounting and everything in between which are run regularly by some very talented individuals. Even if you're a seasoned entrepreneur with decades of experience, there are plenty of modules which offer insights into a wide range of topics.

What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

It's a great community to be part of and meeting other members at the various events is always enjoyable. There are the obvious networking opportunities, but it also acts like a support network which helps with the challenges of running an SME.



Rachel Black,
Sales Manager - IT Services and Cloud,
Cegal

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Cegal is a strategic IT and geoscience partner, helping energy companies modernise, optimise, and innovate. With 900 specialists in 10 countries - including a strong presence in

Aberdeen and London - we combine deep energy industry expertise with advanced IT capabilities.

Whether our customers need secure cloud hosting through our Cetegra platform, managed IT services, data management, or geoscience software and consulting, we deliver reliable, end-to-end solutions tailored to their operational needs. We help to unlock greater value from our customers' data and technology.

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

One of our biggest challenges in the UK energy industry is supporting clients through the rapid pace of digital transformation while balancing legacy systems, data complexity, and increased pressure to decarbonise.

Many organisations are eager to modernise, but they're constrained by fragmented data environments,

ageing infrastructure, and regulatory demands.

Our role at Cegal is to help bridge that gap - delivering secure, scalable IT and geoscience solutions that enable smarter decision-making and operational agility. The challenge is complex, but it's also where we create the most value.

What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

As a central force in the Aberdeen region, the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in supporting Cegal's growth.

Through its leadership in facilitating business connections, offering exclusive networking and training opportunities, and delivering valuable market intelligence, the Chamber has provided access to resources and relationships that we may not have found elsewhere.

MEMBER MEET *the* ME



Morgan Dunn

*Senior Marketing and Communications
Co-ordinator,
Befriend a Child*

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Befriend a Child is a local charity supporting children and young people across Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire. Since 1975, we have supported over 5,500 local children growing up in complicated life circumstances, helping them overcome disadvantage and have the best chance in life to thrive.

As the only dedicated befriending and mentoring service for children in the Northeast of Scotland, we deliver both 1:1 and group programmes for children and young people aged 5-16 years.

Who do you support?

Referrals are made through professional services, including social work and education, ensuring our support reaches those who need it most. The children referred face a range of challenges, including social isolation, low confidence and self-esteem, and poor wellbeing.

Many lack a trusted, responsible adult in their lives and can often be affected by poverty, parental alcohol or substance misuse, abuse, and neglect.

Additional difficulties include parental mental health issues, bereavement, family disability, and responsibilities as young carers or living in kinship care.

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

As a charity, we rely entirely on grants, donations, and support from the community and corporate partners to continue our vital work.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, we are so excited for the next 50 years of Befriend a Child and through befriending, mentoring, group activities and family support, we can continue to be there to brighten futures and create long lasting and life changing friendships

What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Take full advantage of all the fantastic benefits and opportunities that are possible due to being a member.

Not only that, you get to meet wonderful like-minded people along the way!



Diana Gormley,

*Managing Director,
Danu Solutions Ltd*

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

I believe that there is a future where your business thrives due to engaged employees, operational excellence, and a culture of continuous improvement. Where a steady flow of enhanced quality, efficiency, and

profitability is just business as usual. I believe your business has everything it needs to make that future happen now; you just need to find a way to use it, and that's where I can help.

Who are your customers?

I work with SMEs who believe that their people are their greatest asset. Many of them (but not all) are involved in manufacturing or production. They want to increase team member engagement and retention, improve efficiency and quality, and reduce operating costs and lead times. On a more personal level, they want less stress and frustration, and more time to fully utilise their skills in a way that will move the business forward.

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

The biggest challenge at the minute is raising awareness of the value of implementing a continuous improvement culture and using a

lean approach. Many businesses are aware of ISO 9001 but are less familiar with lean and its incredible potential for organisational transformation.

The biggest opportunity is helping Scottish businesses to excel through the empowerment of their people, to drive operational excellence and maximise their competitive advantage at a national and global level.

What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Don't stay still in your business. Embrace change and innovation, stay curious, keep learning, ask for help if you need it and always put people first.

What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

The opportunity to connect and build relationships with local businesses, opening up opportunities for collaboration and creating impact at a local level. The Morning Bulletin is a great way to stay up to date with the local business scene and showcase our innovative service.

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Opportunity North East celebrates regional success and sets bold vision for economic growth



Sir Ian Wood KT GBE, chair of ONE, welcomed guests and set the context for 10 years of action and investment in the region's growth sectors.

North-east Scotland's private-sector-led economic development body, Opportunity North East (ONE) has marked more than nine years of catalytic action and investment that is reshaping the regional economy and set the stage for the next wave of growth, innovation and ambition.

ONE brought together more than 120 regional leaders, entrepreneurs, founders, and changemakers for its annual event "Transforming Our Future, Delivering with Impact". The event marked a decade of catalytic action and investment that is reshaping the regional economy – and sets the stage for the next wave of growth, innovation and ambition.

Hosted by broadcaster and journalist James Hanson at ONE SeedPod, Scotland's food and drink innovation hub, which opened in the summer, the event welcomed a powerful lineup of voices. Speakers included Sir Ian Wood KT GBE, chair of ONE, Jennifer Crow MBE, chief executive of ONE, and Paul Cheek of the Martin Trust Centre for Entrepreneurship at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) – a globally recognised expert on innovation-led business growth – who discussed how artificial intelligence is transforming entrepreneurship.

Mentors and founders engaged in the North East Venture Mentoring Service led by ONE shared their experiences of its impact and life sciences leaders discussed the significance of the entrepreneurial ecosystem built over the past nine years.

The story so far

Founded in 2015 to accelerate economic diversification, ONE has committed £35million of its philanthropic funding from the Wood Foundation to drive transformation across key growth sectors – including digital tech, food, drink and agriculture, green energy, life sciences and tourism.

Speaking at the event, Sir Ian Wood praised the power of private-sector leadership and collaborative delivery: "We've made significant progress despite a decade of extraordinary economic shocks. In this region, private-sector-led economic transformation and partnership working have been constants.

"ONE delivers transformational projects – this food and drink innovation hub is the most recent example – and provides entrepreneurial education and support to founders creating and scaling innovation-led businesses.

"My ask of you is to stay engaged, stay focused, and use the opportunities we create to further your ambitions. Together, we will transform our economy."

Jennifer Crow, chief executive officer of ONE, reflected on the organisation's journey and reaffirmed its ambitious path forward: "Ten years ago, ONE was born out of vision and leadership. Our mission was clear: diversify the economy.

"Independent analysis shows that ONE investment has generated £135million for the North-east and £190million at a Scottish level. But this is about more than numbers, it's about impact driving economic growth.

"What makes ONE different is not just what we do. It's how we do it. Private sector leaders giving back, mentors investing time and expertise, founders taking risks and the Wood Foundation and our partners backing ambition with funding.

"We are building a unique model of private-sector leadership – one that gives back, unlocks potential, and creates opportunity for generations to come. The impact to date is a success shared by many and the next decade is ours to claim."



BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



Jennifer MacLennan,
Group Managing Director
Fifth Ring

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

I've been fortunate to work with strong leaders who shaped my path, but two stand out. My first editor was fearless - she led with clarity, handled complex team dynamics, and always got things done. She taught me the value of resilience and decisive leadership.

Later, Ian Ord (founder of Fifth Ring) took a chance on me during the Aberdeen oil price crash - there was no role, but he saw potential. He has always led Fifth Ring with passion and I take that and more forward in the Managing Director role.

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

The Insights Discovery training has probably been one of the most impactful experiences of my career. Learning about communication styles through colour profiles for different people has helped me recognise my own behaviours and adapt to others more effectively. It's been invaluable within my personal life and across every business role - from managing teams and collaborating cross-functionally to building trust with clients wherever they are in the world. It gave me

the language to drive performance, defuse situations, and get the best out of people. Once you understand how people tick, you connect better, lead better, and create stronger, more cohesive teams.

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

You quickly realise you control far less than you think. The key is knowing what's truly within your control, what's within your influence, and how to strengthen that influence to achieve meaningful outcomes. That's especially true in marketing: if you could control everything, you wouldn't need it. Marketing is about shifting perspectives, sparking action, and creating positive change. At Fifth Ring, that's central to our culture. We don't influence for the sake of it - we do it to make things measurably better for our clients, their audiences, and their impact on the world. Influence, with purpose, is powerful.

What's been your proudest career achievement to date?

Being nominated for Global Agency of the Year at the 2024 B2B Marketing Awards was a huge moment - I am so proud and passionate of our international expertise and recognition on that

scale meant a lot to us as a team. Equally, being certified as a Great Place to Work in 2024 reflected the culture we've built at Fifth Ring, which I'm incredibly proud of. The certification is independently verified and is validation that our people are happy, supported, and engaged.

Beyond awards, seeing people I've mentored go on to achieve success in their own careers is just as rewarding. Knowing I've played even a small role in their journey is the kind of legacy that really matters to me.

What was your first job?

Junior reporter at the Ayrshire Post, where I got started in local news. I helped launch a new edition and learned so many skills about communication I still use today.

Who or what inspires you most?

I'm inspired by successful working mums who prove there's no single way to lead - and by my own kids, who remind me daily why it matters to be a strong role model.

What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?

"Innovative solutions" - it's vague, overused, and rarely says what you're actually doing. Just be clear - if you're doing something different, say that.

Building futures together: Championing work experience for Aberdeen's next generation



**How
W M
Donald and
Aberdeen City
Council are inspiring
the next generation
through work placements.**

Encouraging young people to gain hands-on experience in the workplace is one of the most effective ways to prepare them for their future careers.

At W M Donald, a strong belief in the value of hands-on experience has inspired practical action – leading to notable success. Over the past two years, the company has worked closely with Aberdeen City Council to offer work experience placements for learners with transformative results for both the young people and the business.

From one-day taster sessions, to six-month placements of one day per week, W M Donald has provided young people with a genuine insight into the world of work. The company has also offered week-long placements, allowing pupils to experience different aspects of the business and gain a real understanding of what a career in the construction and civil engineering industry looks like.

These placements are much more than an opportunity to spend time in a workplace, they are an introduction to the many career pathways available within the company. Participants gain exposure to a wide range of roles, from HR, accounts, engineering and project management to on-site operations and administration. By engaging with real projects and learning alongside experienced staff, young people can see how their skills and interests align with potential careers.

The initiative has been a resounding success. Several students who completed their placements have since returned to W M Donald after leaving school to join the company as full-time modern/graduate apprentices. This transition from short term work experience to permanent employment highlights the power of early engagement in shaping future career choices. It also demonstrates how collaboration between employers, schools, and local authorities can lead to long term benefits for both young people and businesses.

For many pupils, a placement with W M Donald has also been a valuable opportunity for self-discovery. Experiencing the workplace first-hand helps young people confirm whether the career path they have in mind is truly right for them. This reassurance or, in some cases, a realisation that they may wish to explore another route is an equally positive outcome. It ensures that when they make decisions about their education or training, those choices are informed by real experience.

The success of W M Donald's partnership with Aberdeen City Council is a testament to what can be achieved when employers open their doors to young people.

Author: Rachel O'Donnell
Assoc CIPD, HR manager,
W M Donald Ltd Civil
Engineering Contractors

As W M Donald continues to grow, so too does its dedication to creating opportunities for young people to learn, explore, and succeed. The company hopes that its example will inspire more employers across the city to offer work experience, helping to build a stronger, more skilled, and confident future workforce for everyone.

If your business would like to support Aberdeen's next generation by offering work experience opportunities, please register at **www.workit.info/employer**. Workit is Aberdeen City Council's new online portal that enables employers to directly advertise placements, including available dates, helping young people gain valuable hands-on experience in the workplace.

To find out more please contact DYWNE at **info@dyw.org.uk** or Dale McKinnon at Aberdeen City Council at **damckinnon@aberdeencity.gov.uk**.



OPINION
OPINION

Back
to business...
and
back
to
the
office



You can tell a lot about the state of the economy from what's flying off the shelves in shops. And right now, TM Lewin - once left high and dry by the pandemic - has dusted off its tape measures, restocked the collar stiffeners, and returned to the high street.

Its decision to open new stores is being fuelled by something our members have been talking about for months: people are heading back to the office in significant numbers.

Across the North-east, Chamber members are telling us that the pendulum is swinging once again. The once-radical idea of remote-first work has quietly been replaced with something far more traditional. And, if the dry-cleaning bills and sandwich queues are anything to go by, the office is having its comeback moment.

The structure emerging most often is 4:1 - four days in the office, one from home. That's a notable shift from the 3:2 hybrid model that became commonplace after lockdowns ended. Some firms are setting fixed days; others are offering a little flexibility. But the trend is clear: the office is not just open - it's busy again.

Why does this matter? Because workplace culture is shifting once more, and this time it's being driven as much by commercial necessity as collaboration. In sectors like energy, legal, finance and tech, our members tell us that teams work more effectively when they're physically together.

It helps with knowledge transfer, productivity, onboarding, and - crucially for younger workers - learning through osmosis. Some of the best mentoring doesn't happen in a Teams meeting; it happens while making a coffee or walking out of a meeting room together.

This shift is also reigniting conversations about place and belonging. Many employers tell us they've invested heavily in creating offices that people actually want to come back to - spaces that encourage creativity, connection and culture.

That matters in a region like ours, where collaboration across sectors has always been one of our great competitive advantages.

When people come together, ideas flow faster. Innovation happens. Culture takes shape. And that's the stuff that ultimately drives productivity and growth.

Recent research by Aberdeen Considine found that over 90% of Scottish SMEs are prioritising a return to full-time office working. That may raise eyebrows in boardrooms still clinging to hotdesking spreadsheets, but it underlines a real desire among business leaders to re-establish a sense of place, purpose and presence.

And let's remember - most businesses in our region are small or medium-sized. They don't have sprawling digital infrastructure or large HR departments. What they do have is a deep understanding of what works for them - and increasingly, that means seeing their people, in person, most of the week.

Of course, the return to the office doesn't mean a return to rigidity. We're seeing a more human approach to presenteeism. Employees are still being offered flexibility, but within the framework of being together more often. It's less about clocking in and more about being visible, available and engaged.

And yes, that means dressing the part too. Just like TM Lewin, many employers tell us they've noticed people taking more pride in presentation again. There's a move away from the pandemic-era hoodie and back toward smart-casual - or just plain smart. It's not about impressing your boss; it's about feeling professional.

For the North-east economy, this cultural reset couldn't come at a better time. As we look to rebuild confidence and accelerate the energy transition, success will depend on teams working closely, sharing knowledge and solving complex problems together. The physical office - whether it's on Union Street or in Westhill - remains a vital hub for that.

So, what's next? We expect to see more firms formalising their return-to-office policies in the coming months. One thing is certain: the era of the fully remote, Zoom-everything workplace is fading. Not because it failed - but because work, at its best, is social, collaborative, and surprisingly well-dressed.

And if you ever need a good barometer for that? Just pop into a shirt shop.



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

Law firm partner and son complete K2 Base Camp Trek in memory of Doddie Weir

A partner at a Scottish law firm has risen to new heights in his fundraising efforts, completing one of the most spectacular high-altitude journeys in the world to raise almost £4k for My Name's Doddie Foundation and Cash for Kids.

Robert Holland, 53, partner and head of employment law at Aberdeen Considine, took on the 14-day K2 Base Camp Trek alongside his son Daniel in August.

The pair covered more than 220km through Northern Pakistan's Baltoro Glacier and Karakoram mountains, battling severe rain, flooding, rockfalls and altitude sickness on their way to the foot of the world's second-highest peak.

The trek took the father and son deep into one of the most remote regions on earth. "We were walking for up to 10 hours a day, with no Wi-Fi or phone signal, which is the most cut off I've been since starting to work", Robert said. "Even the most experienced trekkers in our group admitted it was more intense than expected. There were moments of real danger, including rockfalls that forced us out of our tents in the middle of the night."

Despite the physical and mental challenges, Robert said what kept them moving forward were the causes they were supporting, and the memory of the late rugby legend, Doddie Weir, who died in 2022 after living with motor neuron disease for almost six years.



Thinking of Selling or Leasing?

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Natalie Edwards at Laurie & Company in Aberdeen is here to guide you every step of the way – whether you're selling or leasing your property.

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Navigating Winter Roads:

How to Protect Yourself After an Accident

b+m

As winter approaches, so too does a set of challenges for anyone who drives, cycles or walks. Longer nights, wet weather, icy conditions and reduced visibility all combine to create a season where the risk of road traffic accidents rises. Every year, we see the impact of this: not just in damaged vehicles, but in the very real injuries and emotional stress that people face in the aftermath.

While none of us can prevent every accident, knowing what to do if the worst happens can make all the difference – both in terms of protecting your health and in ensuring you can make a successful claim for compensation if you are entitled to make one.

Why acting quickly matters

The immediate aftermath of an accident is often overwhelming. Adrenaline kicks in and people understandably focus first on whether anyone is hurt. What you do in those first moments and hours can shape the success of any future claim. Legal claims are subject to strict time limits and evidence can quickly be lost. That is why taking the right steps early is so important.

The key details you should capture

Based on years of experience helping clients through the claims process, we know which details are vital to record. Here are the essentials:

- **When the accident happened:** The exact date and time are crucial as strict legal deadlines apply to personal injury claims.
- **Who was involved:** Collect the names and contact details of all drivers along with their vehicle registration numbers.
- **Insurance details:** If possible, record the other party's insurance company and policy number.
- **Witness information:** Independent witness accounts can make a huge difference, so note down names, addresses and phone numbers.
- **Photos and video evidence:** Capture the scene of the accident, the road conditions and the damage to vehicles. Modern smartphones make this easy, and these images often provide vital clarity later. Also check for dashcam footage.
- **Medical records:** If you have been injured, seek medical attention straight away. Whether that means visiting your GP, calling NHS 24 or going directly to hospital, this ensures your injuries are treated – and that there is an official record of them.
- **Vouching:** Keep receipts for any outlays incurred as a result of the accident.

Supporting your recovery — and your claim

Making a personal injury claim isn't just about compensation. It's about making sure you have the support you need to recover, whether that's through medical treatment, rehabilitation or financial assistance while you're unable to work. By gathering the right information early, you strengthen your case and make the process smoother and less stressful.

A team by your side

At Balfour+Manson, we understand that the period after an accident can feel daunting. Our team of specialist solicitors is here not just to handle the legal complexities, but to provide reassurance and guidance every step of the way. Our role is to take the burden off your shoulders so that you can focus on what really matters: your recovery.

Looking ahead

Winter driving will always carry risks. By approaching the season with awareness, preparation and a clear understanding of what to do if an accident happens, you can protect both your wellbeing and your legal rights. Should the worst occur, know that support is available – you don't have to navigate the road ahead alone.

Julie Clark-Spence
Partner

01224 498084

julie.clark-spence@
balfour-manson.co.uk





Business has always been about one thing... and that's people.

World-renowned business leadership speaker and author Simon Sinek once said: "Customers will never love a company until the employees love it first", and this is why we must build our businesses around our people, focussing on company culture and professional and personal development.

At Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, we know your team is your greatest asset which is why our training is designed by business, for business.

We provide practical courses which are built to strengthen skills, build confidence and equip your team with the tools they need to succeed.

Read on to discover how Chamber training courses can support the development of your greatest asset - your people.

Get in touch today to discuss your training requirements and download our 2026 training brochure.



WWW.AGCC.CO.UK/TRAINING | TRAINING@AGCC.CO.UK | 01224 343923

Watch the full advert here



Featured Trainer:

Susan MacLennan

With over 20 years' experience in organisational and people development, I've spent my career helping individuals and teams unlock their potential and perform at their best. My path has taken me through diverse sectors - including higher education, energy and professional services - and what I've learned along the way is that no matter the industry, success always comes down to people.

I'm a qualified and experienced executive coach and workplace mediator and as a former senior manager in HR I've been on both sides of the table. I know what it's like to work in challenging times, to deliver results under pressure and to juggle the competing demands that complex roles bring. That lived experience shapes the way I work with clients today: my training is practical, relevant and rooted in the real world, not just theory.

What really drives me is seeing people grow in confidence and capability. Whether it's a manager navigating organisational change, a team learning to collaborate more effectively or an individual finding their voice, I love helping people achieve those 'lightbulb moments' when things start to click. My sessions are designed to be interactive, engaging and above all, useful - participants leave not just with new ideas, but with tools and strategies they can immediately put into practice.

My training portfolio at the Chamber spans Resilience and Wellbeing; Coaching Skills for Managers; Time Management; Dealing with Difficult Situations; Cross Cultural Communication; Interviewing Skills and the use of psychometric tools to build self-awareness. My approach is always collaborative.



I take time to understand the culture and context of each organisation I work with, and I tailor my courses and programmes so they are relevant and meaningful. I bring energy, humour and plenty of practical insight to every session - I want people to enjoy the experience as much as they learn from it. Clients often tell me they value my ability to combine professionalism with warmth and to create a learning environment where people feel at ease, motivated and open to new ways of thinking.

If you're looking to support your teams through change, build stronger collaboration or invest in the wellbeing of your workforce, I'd love to work with you. My goal is simple: to help people thrive, and in doing so, help organisations flourish.

www.agcc.co.uk/training/upcoming-courses



Addressing imposter syndrome for yourself and your teams, by Nara Morrison, Trainer at Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce

Skills are not the only thing that people bring to work. They bring emotions, doubts and fears too. One common challenge is imposter syndrome. It chips away at confidence and blocks potential.

Addressing imposter syndrome is more than managing episodes of self-doubt. It's about building inclusive environments, ensuring psychological safety and nurturing a culture where people feel valued.

In training with AGCC, small groups create safe spaces. Here, people unpack imposter feelings and explore how these feelings hold them back which leads to real change.

Take our course to tackle Imposter Syndrome and view all other management courses at www.agcc.co.uk/training

Marcliffe unveils new whisky bar and luxury bedrooms in latest phase of transformation

Marcliffe, Aberdeen's only five-star hotel, is proud to announce the opening of its brand-new whisky and sports bar, The Cushie, alongside the launch of three newly designed luxury bedrooms – Balmoral, Crathes and Fraser.

Named in tribute to the region's rich heritage, the new bedrooms reflect the timeless elegance and comfort that guests have come to expect from the Marcliffe. Each room has been thoughtfully curated to retain elements of the original rooms, from upcycled furniture and locally inspired artwork to carefully selected ornaments that honour the hotel's legacy.

As part of the upgrade, includes The Balmoral Suite which offers a master bedroom fit for a King and Queen. Featuring a four-poster king-size bed, built-in wardrobes, a dressing table and a soft seating area with garden views, the suite is complemented by a spa-inspired en-suite with a roll-top bath and separate rainfall shower. The adjoining Balmoral Lounge provides a spacious retreat with luxury seating, a private bar area, wine coolers, and a pull-out bed for additional guests, complete with its own en-suite. This is more than a suite. It's an experience reserved for those who expect nothing less than the extraordinary.

A further six bedrooms on the south side of the hotel will also undergoing a luxury upgrade.

These rooms will include larger layouts, updated interiors, improved air conditioning and enhanced in-room features that reflects the guest feedback from the #MyMarcliffe survey.

Adding to the hotel's evolving offering is The Cushie - a warm and inviting whisky and sports lounge located within the main hotel building. With a rich, cosy interior and a curated selection of Scotland's finest whiskies, it's the perfect place to unwind. The space retains memorabilia from the former billiard room, preserving its connection to local sporting heroes and adding a layer of nostalgia and character.

Available exclusively for private hire, The Cushie offers a refined setting for intimate drinks receptions, alternative meeting spaces or relaxed private dining to enjoy live sports or a tailored whisky experience. Bookings are managed through the hotel's events team and not available via online reservation.

These latest additions mark another milestone in the hotel's multi-million-pound investment, reaffirming Marcliffe's commitment to delivering exceptional experiences rooted in Scottish charm and elegance.



WORDS OF ADVICE



Anurag Rai,
Founder & Organisational Psychologist,
AMHWAL Academy

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

We design and deliver transformative leadership and workplace training programmes rooted in organisational psychology; helping businesses build high-performing, resilient, and human-centred cultures.

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

I lead with trust, clarity, and autonomy. I empower my team to take ownership while staying aligned with a clear vision. It builds loyalty, creativity, and high performance.

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

Imposter syndrome. I tackled it by embracing vulnerability, investing in self-awareness, changing my self-talk and surrounding myself with people who reminded me of my worth and vision.

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

"You don't rise to the level of your goals. You fall to the level of your systems." This changed how I approach both life and business.

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

Be curious, ask questions, and don't wait to be perfect before you contribute. Progress always beats perfection here.



Ryan Pirie,
Operations Director,
Kore Solutions

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Kore Solutions specialises in designing and delivering smart building technology and energy-efficient solutions. Through our air conditioning, fire and security, electrical and cabling services, we help businesses improve efficiency, reduce costs, and create safer, smarter environments specific to their needs.

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

My style is built on good communication and having faith in the team's ability to do what they're skilled at. Giving people the space to take ownership while knowing they're supported has helped us grow a strong, capable team.

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

Finding the right engineers to fit our culture and technical needs has always been challenging. We tackled this by effectively growing our own talent, investing in apprenticeships to build the next generation. We currently have three apprentices developing across our divisions, with more planned soon.

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

"Don't be afraid to ask questions." It's simple but powerful. Whether you're learning something new or making key decisions, asking the right questions opens doors, builds understanding, and helps you avoid costly mistakes.

Building Cleaner, Greener Workplaces Across the North

Spectrum Service Solutions is a multi-award-winning facilities management solutions provider with over 20 years of experience in commercial cleaning throughout the UK.

We are delighted to be part of the Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce as a Gold Member. Aberdeen and the surrounding area are critical regions for Spectrum; we have a strong portfolio of clients in the region, and therefore, we are keen to establish closer links with the business community in the area. We believe that taking an active part in the work of AGCC is the perfect way to support the business community and build meaningful relationships.



Speaking about Spectrum's strong presence in Aberdeen, Managing Director, Rebecca Bell, commented:

"Aberdeen and the wider Grampian region are important to Spectrum, and I think the business community in the North particularly appreciates our culture; they recognise we are not only committed to delivering excellent service, but we are also passionate about the way we clean and the way we deliver our services.

"We employ many people here, and we have a strong client base in the North of Scotland. I truly believe our success is primarily because of the culture we have created at Spectrum and the manner in which every member of the team accepts they are ambassadors for the brand, meaning they take pride in their work and consistently deliver to a high standard."

We have long-established contracts in Aberdeen, Dundee, and the surrounding areas, where we provide a full range of commercial cleaning and FM services across most industry sectors. For example, through our long-standing relationship with CBRE, we have recently re-signed our contract with Aker Solutions as part of the CBRE Global Workplace Solutions (GWS) programme; and, under the same programme, we work with NESPF, Chevron and at nine sites for Halliburton in Aberdeen.

Our daily work extends far beyond commercial office operations; we are delighted to have worked with V&A Dundee since the world-renowned design museum opened in 2018, and fish processors Pelagia are also valued clients. In addition to our ongoing contracts, our Events Team regularly provides cleaning services for annual or one-off events; we've worked with Aberdeen Kiltwalk for many years, and we were delighted to provide a range of services at the highly successful Tall Ships Races Aberdeen in July.

With such a strong and growing client portfolio in the North, we have a full complement of regional managers, operations managers, supervisors, cleaners and mobile cleaning teams delivering services daily.

In the North of Scotland, we provide all of the services you'd expect from one of Scotland's leading independent, family-owned businesses. A large part of our growth over the last 20 years is attributable to our people and our approach. Our reputation for operational excellence is built on reliability, attention to detail, and a client-centric approach. Sustainability is embedded in our operations, from chemical-free cleaning and waste reduction to data-driven service delivery, ensuring we meet client needs while minimising environmental impact.

Aberdeen has long been recognised as a hub for technological advancement, with its businesses consistently leading the way in adopting and developing cutting-edge solutions. This forward-thinking environment makes it the perfect setting for Spectrum, where innovation is embedded in everything we do.

We pride ourselves on being early adopters of emerging technologies, from chemical-free cleaning systems to robotics and automation. But for us, innovation is never about change for its own sake. Every new process or tool we pilot must deliver measurable benefits, whether that's improved efficiency, enhanced service delivery, or a stronger return on investment for our clients.





spectrum

End-to-end facilities management solutions

We deliver one-stop, value-driven facilities management solutions that ensure efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and complete peace of mind for clients. By taking the time to listen and build strong relationships, we gain a clear understanding of each client's unique requirements and tailor our services accordingly. Our integrated approach offers a genuine "one-stop shop" for all FM needs. Accredited to ISO9001, ISO14001, and ISO45001, and with a growing portfolio of Tier 1 COMAH sites across Scotland, we bring both proven capability and industry-leading standards to every contract.

An accountable management team driving performance throughout the team

We have a dedicated management team covering Aberdeen that includes Client Engagement Director, Jill Archibald (Top), Regional Operations Manager, Jennie McColl (Middle), and Area Manager, Caroline Kane (Bottom).



Jennie & Caroline are responsible not only for managing contracts and building relationships with our clients, but also for building the high-performing team in Aberdeen, and exploring better ways to deliver our service.



The management team's primary goal is to ensure clients get what they pay for by meeting and, whenever possible, exceeding their expectations. However, they recognise that this is only possible by investing in the development of their people by providing ongoing training, the right tools to enable them to perform at a high level, and maintaining constant, clear engagement and communication. In essence, it's about establishing the Spectrum culture among the entire workforce.



The management team are passionate about helping people advance in facilities management, particularly within Spectrum. Jennie expresses this well when she says, "I get a great deal of satisfaction from most of the things I do. But one thing that gives me particular pleasure is witnessing a team member being upgraded to a more senior position. Seeing people thrive in the company and helping them to progress is very rewarding."



Proud to work with:



With so many new contracts coming on board recently, Jill has had lots of opportunities to build relationships with clients and assist in the personal development of the team members. However, she also welcomes the opportunity to network with fellow Aberdeen Chamber members and offer the benefit of her experience whenever she can.

We're proud to be part of AGCC and look forward to building new partnerships. If you'd like to meet, share experiences, or explore opportunities to work together, we'd love to hear from you.



Telephone: 07775 426 394 Email: jill@spectrumservicesolutions.com

spectrumservicesolutions.com



People power: TMM Executive reinvents leadership for the North-east

For more than a quarter of a century, TMM Recruitment has been a fixture of the North-east business landscape.

Founded in 1997, the Aberdeen-based consultancy has built its reputation on connecting companies with talent – from graduate trainees to boardroom leaders – across finance, HR, legal, IT, office support, QHSE, supply chain, technical and engineering.

Now, two bold moves are reinforcing its position as one of the region's most progressive firms: the launch of a new Leadership on Demand service by its executive search specialism, TMM Executive, and its landmark transition to employee ownership.

Both speak to the same core principle that has underpinned TMM's story from the start – people are at the heart of business success.

Leadership on Demand – flexible expertise for changing times

In a climate where businesses face constant change – from economic pressures to shifting workforce expectations – access to the right leadership has never been more vital. But not every organisation can afford, or attract, a permanent senior executive when a challenge arises.

That's where TMM Executive's Leadership on Demand comes in. TMM Executive specialises in high-value leadership resourcing and this new service connects companies of all sizes with a pool of seasoned executives – including former CEOs, finance directors, HR specialists and sector experts – who are available on a pay-as-you-go basis.

“We became aware of two converging trends,” explains Amanda McCulloch, chief executive of TMM Recruitment.

“On one hand, organisations were telling us they wanted affordable access to senior-level expertise, even if only for a specific project or period of transition. On the other, we were hearing from many highly experienced leaders who wanted to move into a more flexible way of working. Leadership on Demand is about bringing those two groups together.”

**“We’ve
always been
a people
business,
built by the
incredible
talent and
dedication of
our team.”**

Known as “fractional executives” in recruitment circles, this model has been gaining traction globally.

What sets TMM’s service apart is its highly tailored approach: rather than simply assigning an available executive, the firm applies the same consultative process it has perfected over 25 years in recruitment – identifying, presenting, and recommending candidates who align with a client’s exact needs.

The result could be an interim FD delivering a growth strategy, an HR leader guiding organisational change, or an experienced CEO parachuted in to troubleshoot during a critical moment. Bespoke arrangements – part-time, fixed-term or project-based – allow flexibility on both sides.

For the executives themselves, many of whom have spent decades at the top of their professions, it’s a way of continuing to contribute without the demands of a full-time role.



"After a long career in operations and management, I had been thinking for some time about finding a more flexible way of working," says Donald Taylor, former managing director at TAQA, who has joined the TMM network.

"When I heard about the service, it felt like the perfect opportunity to use my experience to help local businesses while shaping a different work-life balance for myself."

Corinne Kelt, a respected HR leader, highlights why TMM's flexible model resonates:

"In energy, there's constant tension between skills resourcing and headcount constraints.

Fractional executives offer timely, tailored leadership without long-term overhead.

"For me, joining TMM's executive network is a win-win. It allows me to stay engaged in meaningful leadership, advising and coaching teams on a fractional or project basis. By applying my experience and independent perspective, I help shape people strategies that drive future business success."

For North-east firms navigating growth, uncertainty or succession challenges, it's a game-changing resource.

A people business – from the inside out

While TMM is helping local companies rethink leadership, it has also been reimagining its own future. This year, the firm became employee-owned, transferring its shares into an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT).

It's a step that ensures the independence and continuity of a company long respected for its values-driven approach – while giving every member of staff a direct stake in its success.

"We've always been a people business, built by the incredible talent and dedication of our team," says Amanda McCulloch, who has led the firm since 2009.

"This Employee Ownership Trust is our way of recognising and rewarding the people who have been instrumental in making TMM Recruitment what it is today. It's not just a business transaction; it's a commitment to our team's future and a testament to the collaborative spirit that defines us."

Employee ownership is a model first introduced by the UK Government in 2014, designed to safeguard company culture, retain local ownership and enhance employee engagement. In practice, studies show that EOTs often lead to improved performance, higher staff retention, and stronger long-term planning.

For TMM, the shift also offers a competitive edge in the war for talent. In a region where attracting and retaining skilled people is a constant challenge, being able to offer staff a genuine voice and stake in the business sets it apart.

Amanda herself embodies the journey from trainee to leader. Having joined TMM as a graduate consultant in 1999, she rose rapidly through the ranks before taking on the role of chief executive.

That trajectory, and the firm's decision to anchor its future in the hands of its people, reflects

the same belief underpinning Leadership on Demand: when you invest in people, businesses thrive.

Anchored in Aberdeen, looking to the future

TMM's dual announcements come at a time when leadership and culture are under intense scrutiny.

The pandemic accelerated conversations about flexible working, portfolio careers, and values-driven organisations. Employees are seeking purpose and autonomy; businesses are searching for resilience and agility.

By moving to employee ownership while simultaneously opening the doors of the boardroom to companies across the region, TMM has positioned itself at the intersection of these shifts.

For its clients, Leadership on Demand offers a pipeline of wisdom and expertise that can help navigate change. For its own people, the EOT ensures that the company remains true to its North-east roots while empowering its team to shape what comes next.

Both moves send the same message: in business, people and culture are not soft issues – they are the foundation of success.

As Amanda puts it: "These developments are about the same thing: creating structures that put people first. Whether that's giving our team ownership of the company's future or helping local businesses access exceptional leadership talent, it all comes from the same belief that when you invest in people, everything else falls into place."



Developer tables £10million plan to redevelop for Baker Hughes site

A long-vacant site in Aberdeen's Bridge of Don is set for a new lease of life under plans for a £10million investment.

West Coast Estates has unveiled ambitious proposals to transform the former Baker Hughes land on Woodside Road into a vibrant roadside destination.

The 1.85-hectare site will be redeveloped to include a new Lidl foodstore, an EV charging hub and a café/restaurant.

The £10million investment will create around 90 permanent jobs, along with 100 construction roles during the build phase, bringing much-needed facilities for local residents and commuters.

Developers say the scheme represents the productive reuse of brownfield land, delivering "strong occupiers, improved connections and a credible example of sustainable regeneration in action."

The proposals come as significant investment gathers pace on the opposite side of the road, where Cala Homes has secured planning permission to build a £20million premium housing development on the former Silverburn House site.

DeepOcean charts near-shore survey and IMR-vessel

Ocean services provider DeepOcean has expanded its service offering to the offshore renewables and oil and gas industries by entering into a time charter agreement for the multipurpose support vessel Glomar Supporter.

DeepOcean will utilise the Glomar Supporter to enhance its offering in survey, inspection and light IMR (inspection, maintenance and repair) markets to developers and operators of offshore wind farms and in the oil and gas sector.

"We already have a large fleet of offshore vessels, but we have actively been looking for smaller vessels that can provide an even more cost-effective offering, particularly in the offshore renewables space. We decided to seize the opportunity when we heard that the Glomar Supporter became available," said Øyvind Mikaelsen, CEO of DeepOcean.



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BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



Stuart Charles Sinclair,
Chief Executive Officer,
Integrity ISS Limited

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

My father, without a doubt. He led by example with quiet integrity and a strong moral compass. He believed in doing things the right way, not the easy way - no shortcuts, no compromises. That ethos has stayed with me throughout my career. His measured approach to life and work instilled in me the value of patience, persistence, and treating people with respect, no matter their role or background. In many ways, my leadership style is shaped by those early lessons I observed at home.

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

Early in my management journey, I took part in a leadership coaching programme that fundamentally reshaped how I approached my role. Until then, I'd been very hands-on - a doer who believed in rolling up sleeves and leading by action. But the programme helped me shift into a more strategic mindset. It taught me to lead through influence rather than instruction, to empower others instead of controlling every outcome, and to step back and see the broader picture. That transition was pivotal in preparing me for senior leadership.

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

The ability to truly listen - to your team, your clients, your instincts -

is a game-changer. Listening isn't passive; it's active and intentional. Over the years, I've learned that the best ideas often come from unexpected places, and the most resilient teams are built on mutual understanding. When you create space for people to be heard, you foster trust, creativity, and a shared sense of purpose. It's not just about hearing words - it's about understanding meaning and context.

What's been your proudest career achievement to date?

There's a special kind of pride that comes from building something enduring, and for me, that's been our team. We've created a high-performing group of professionals who are not only incredibly capable but genuinely enjoy working together. Culture isn't something that happens by accident - it's built deliberately - and seeing that investment pay off has been deeply rewarding. Working alongside my best friend and COO, Peter Fraser, has only enriched the experience. We challenge and support each other daily, and that trust is the foundation of our success.

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

The North-east has a unique character - there's a quiet strength in its people that you don't find everywhere. Loyalty, resilience, and honesty run deep here. Whether

you're working with local partners, clients, or communities, there's a refreshing authenticity in how people do business. It's a place where relationships matter and where long-term thinking is valued. That makes it not just a great place to operate but a great place to belong.

What was your first job?

A paper round when I was 13. It taught me discipline and commitment - especially on those dark, wintry mornings when staying in bed would've been far easier. Rain, shine, or snow, the job had to be done.

Who or what inspires you most?

I'm inspired by leaders who remain grounded no matter how high they rise. Those who stay humble, who lead with values and who never forget where they came from - they're the ones who leave a lasting impact. It's easy to be charismatic when things go well; it's those who stay true to their values in tough times that truly impress me.

What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?

"Let's circle back." It often feels like a polite way to delay - or worse, avoid - a decision. I'm a fan of straight-talking and follow-through. Let's deal with things, not dance around them.

QUICK-FIRE ROUND

Designing for tomorrow: Building the critical skills of the future



Author: Jonny McCormick,
managing director, Europe,
Lancia Consult

Most organisations don't drift all at once. Drift happens in small, reasonable steps. A reporting line moves. A new system is introduced. A strategy shifts to chase an opportunity. Each decision makes sense in isolation, but over time, they compound. The structure becomes busy rather than purposeful. The people strategy turns into a patchwork of good intentions. You end up with a list of skills you wish you had, and a workforce never fully prepared to realise the vision you now hold.

For years, businesses have said that people are their greatest asset. Yet few treat skills with the same precision and discipline they apply to financial or strategic planning. When most leaders talk about developing people, they focus on what's available, (training budgets, platforms, existing resources) rather than what's required to deliver the future they want.

The changing shape of skills

The half-life of skills continues to shrink. The World Economic Forum predicts that almost half of all workers' core skills will change by 2027. McKinsey reports that nearly nine in ten companies already face, or expect to face, significant skills gaps. These are not just learning problems; they're strategic ones.

Across industries, the same challenge is emerging: what skills will make the biggest difference in the next three to five years, and how do we intentionally build them? Too often, the answer is vague. Organisations invest in broad capability programmes without clarity on which skills create true competitive advantage.

Critical skills are those that unlock performance, enable growth, or protect the business from risk. They are the skills that underpin your strategy...not the nice-to-haves, but the can't-do-withouts. Identifying them requires leaders to look beyond job descriptions and think about the capabilities that make the organisation distinctive.

From broad learning to targeted capability

Once those critical skills are defined, development must become intentional. Generic learning programmes can raise awareness, but they rarely change outcomes. Capability-building that drives impact is linked explicitly to business priorities.

That might mean investing in data literacy, sustainability expertise, or change leadership. It might mean upskilling frontline teams to use new technology or developing managers to lead in new contexts. The key is focus. Every hour and pound spent on learning should be traceable to the value it enables.

A consumer goods client I worked with recognised this shift. Their teams were full of bright, capable people, but their skillsets reflected the business they had been, not the one they were becoming. By mapping the skills needed for their next stage of growth and creating targeted development paths, they built confidence, performance, and momentum within months.

The leadership mindset

Building critical skills is not a side project for HR; it is a strategic responsibility for leaders. It requires clarity about the future, curiosity about what will be needed to reach it, and courage to invest ahead of demand.

Designing for tomorrow is not about teaching everything to everyone. It's about knowing which few skills will make the biggest difference.

The organisations that make this shift will not just keep up with change. They'll shape it.



A circular inset image showing a diverse group of five people (three women and two men) in a professional setting, smiling and shaking hands. The URL 'agcc.co.uk/research' is written in white text across the bottom of this circular area.

agcc.co.uk/research

Understanding people: Research that strengthens culture and drives development

People are at the heart of every organisation. Whether it's attracting new talent, supporting existing teams, or helping young people take their first steps into the world of work, understanding what motivates and engages people is essential for sustainable growth.

That's where research and data make the difference. By uncovering what people really think, feel, and experience, organisations can make decisions that strengthen workplace culture, boost engagement, and support long-term development.

The psychology applied to market research - understanding markets, team dynamics, or individual motivations - has always resonated with me. Coming from a marketing and communications background, I've seen how data can transform the way we connect with people. It informs smarter, data-led decisions that cut through the noise and achieve real objectives. That same principle underpins everything we do at Research Chamber: using evidence to guide action.

We've seen this first-hand through our work on the Developing the Young Workforce (DYW) initiative. In phase one of our study, we gathered insights from employers, educators, and young people across the region to better understand what helps - and sometimes hinders - pathways into work. The findings

didn't just highlight skills gaps; they revealed opportunities for stronger partnerships, clearer communication, and more inclusive approaches to recruitment and training.

Employee engagement research follows the same principle: listen first, then act. Through tailored staff surveys and feedback tools, businesses can identify what drives satisfaction and productivity, where challenges exist, and how leadership, communication, and culture impact everyday experiences. The results help organisations make targeted improvements that benefit both people and performance.

So, how does research support people, culture, and development in practice?

Listening and learning

Every workforce is unique. Gathering data directly from employees - through surveys, interviews, or focus groups - provides the evidence needed to understand real experiences and priorities.

Turning insight into action

Data alone doesn't change culture, but it guides better decisions. The most effective organisations use research findings to inform strategy, improve communication, and build trust.

Measuring progress

Tracking engagement over time helps leaders see whether initiatives are working and where to adjust course. It's about creating a culture of continuous improvement, not one-off measurement.

As businesses adapt to shifting expectations around work, wellbeing, and purpose, research offers a practical route to clarity. It helps organisations stay people-focused while achieving their strategic goals.

Behind every strong culture is understanding - and behind that understanding is good data.



Sarah McColl,
Research and Insights Manager,
Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber
of Commerce

sarah.mccoll@agcc.co.uk

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Installation commemorating the 'ripples' of organ donation unveiled at ARI

An art installation, in recognition of organ donors, and created by their relatives, has been unveiled at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary.

Artist Shelagh Swanson was commissioned to work with the relatives of donors, along with young people at more than a dozen North-east secondary schools, to create glass 'pebbles'. These have been placed on the walls in the foyer of ARI's Emergency Department, reaching up towards the Sandpiper Sanctuary.

Shelagh said: "The idea of the artwork came from the idea of throwing a pebble into the water and the ripples it creates. One family, making the selfless decision to donate a relative's organs and tissue, could save up to nine lives. Those nine people could, in turn, go on to do things they might never have considered possible, due to their health condition. In that way, the impact of organ donation ripples out through the community."

Workshops were held with secondary school pupils across Aberdeen, and in Kemnay, Huntly, Inverurie, Peterhead, and Stonehaven. Donor families were also given the opportunity to participate in dedicated workshops.



Iconic Mary, Queen of Scots Casket goes on display at Art Gallery

One of Scotland's most cherished treasures, a rare French silver casket believed to have been owned by Mary, Queen of Scots, has gone on display at Aberdeen Art Gallery.

This iconic piece of Scotland's national heritage is on loan from National Museums Scotland. It was acquired for the nation in 2022 for £1.8million thanks to support from the National Heritage Memorial Fund, Art Fund, the Scottish Government and several trusts, foundations and individual donors.

Made in Paris, probably between 1493 and 1510, the casket is a superb and extremely rare work of early French silver, very little of which survives, even in France. It is likely that its long-standing association with Mary has kept it preserved for over 450 years.

For three centuries, it was owned by the family of the Dukes of Hamilton, following its acquisition, around 1674, by Anne, Duchess of Hamilton. According to a handwritten note stored with it from the late 17th century, she bought the casket, previously owned by Mary, Marchioness of Douglas, on the understanding that it had belonged to Mary, Queen of Scots.

The Highlight Loan of the Mary, Queen of Scots Casket to Aberdeen Art Gallery is part of National Museums Scotland's National Strategy, which sees collections and expertise shared through loans, participation in national projects, community engagement, funding for acquisitions and free knowledge and skills development opportunities for museums across Scotland.



Councillor Martin Greig with the casket

Royal seal of approval for Mackie's sky-to-scoop sustainability

A royal visit to a renowned Aberdeenshire farm has placed a spotlight on Scottish innovation, sustainability, and premium food production.

Her Royal Highness the Princess Royal was welcomed to Westertown Farm near Inverurie, home to Mackie's of Scotland, where she was shown the company's pioneering dairy, ice cream, and chocolate operations.

The visit highlighted how a fifth-generation farm has evolved into a leader in sustainable food manufacturing, with a fully integrated process producing everything from renewable energy to ice cream on site.

The tour began at the factory where the princess met Doreen Harper and Lesley Skene, Mackie's longest-serving team members – each of whom have been working at the family business for more than 40 years.

Her Royal Highness was then given a tour of the ice cream and chocolate production areas, including processing where the mix is made and packing where the tubs are filled and stacked for shipment around the world.

Visiting Mackie's new product development kitchen, The Princess Royal sampled ice cream and chocolate made with fresh milk and cream from Mackie's own dairy herd, before visiting its 350 strong herd of cows and meeting the farm personnel who oversee their robotic milking.





**ROBERT GORDON
UNIVERSITY ABERDEEN**

Top tips for female entrepreneurs

With millions of followers and multi-million-pound brands between them, Jamie and Grace have built modern empires by doing things differently - fusing authenticity with commercial acumen, community with creativity, and purpose with performance.

On 16 September 2025 the Aberdeen Music Hall was packed with a sell-out crowd of positive, inspired and supportive women who had gathered to hear from the two influential entrepreneurs. If you missed the event - don't worry. Robert Gordon University (RGU) is committed to widening access to learning and education, and proud to share the top five tips shared at the Ultimate Masterclass.

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1 Pushing through

When you're comfortable you can just stay put. It's comfortable and it's easy. But for great things to happen you have to stretch yourself and do things that are uncomfortable. Encouragement is really important. It was encouragement that led me to leave the make-up counter and start a Youtube channel because a customer said: "you can do this".

Jamie Genevieve

2 What makes a brand successful

Consumers and customers want to have a connection with a brand. I love a founder-led business. I want to know why you made it; why you care about it; and how you care about me as a customer.

Jamie Genevieve

3 The work/mum balance

There is no balance because I'm always a mum. But I'm very lucky to have a village around me. My daughter's life is so rich and fulfilled - and that's not all on me all the time. That's a decision I've made.

Jamie Genevieve

4 Why we need female founders

When we're only backing companies created by men - we're only backing products and tech that change the world for men. It just perpetuates the gender issues that we have. What RGU is doing is incredible in terms of providing pathways for women.

Grace Beverley



A film to inspire

SAMH announces location of innovative mental health support hub for Aberdeen



Pictured are (from left): Alex Cumming, executive director of service and delivery at SAMH; Claire Wilson, ACHSCP chief officer for Adult Social Work; Hussein Patwa, chair of Aberdeen Integration Joint Board; Billy Watson, chief executive of SAMH; and Kevin Dawson, ACHSCP Community Mental Health Lead

SAMH (Scottish Action for Mental Health) has unveiled a central Aberdeen location for The Nook: a groundbreaking initiative that provides free mental health support without referrals, rejections or waiting lists.

The Nook is SAMH's response to the national mental health crisis, which sees tens of thousands of people wait too long for the help they need.

Designed to be a welcoming, friendly and accessible space, The Nook operates on a walk-in basis, removing the need to book appointments or receive a referral from a GP. It offers non-clinical, stigma-free mental health support for adults, young people and their families, so that people with mental health problems can ask once and get help fast.

The Nook in Aberdeen will be housed on the ground floor of Marischal Square and will welcome anyone through its doors to talk about mental health and receive non-clinical support. Construction work is due to start in the New Year, with a planned opening towards the middle of 2026.

Aberdeen residents will also benefit from an extensive outreach programme that will accompany The Nook, bringing vital support into even more communities.

The choice of location, in a building owned by Aberdeen City Council, continues the charity's strong partnership with the local authority. SAMH already works with Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeen City Health and Social Care Partnership (ACHSCP) to deliver mental health

support to local residents through suicide prevention, GP link workers, and children and young people's services.

The largest mental health charity initiative in Scotland's history, Nooks across the country will be funded by SAMH's first ever major appeal, which seeks to raise £10million to revolutionise mental health support across Scotland. They will become Scotland's first national network of walk-in mental health support hubs.

Billy Watson, chief executive of SAMH, said: "We are so pleased to bring The Nook to Aberdeen. We know that early intervention and prevention are essential when it comes to caring for our mental health, but we have waited long enough for investment in better community mental health support, so we are taking matters into our own hands.

"The Nook is here to make sure no one faces a mental health problem alone, and to help everyone get the support they need. Better community mental health support is good for all of us. It supports people's recovery, creates new social connections, and relieves pressure on the NHS and other services."

SAMH will raise £10million through donations to pay for the set up and running of The Nooks for three years.

BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



Viktorija (Vik) Thain,
Chief Executive Officer and Founder,
Scotia Financial Solutions

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

Sara Davies - her journey from crafting to Dragon's Den reminds me that no industry or background limits what you can achieve with passion and perseverance.

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

Working with European and Asian companies taught me how to communicate across cultures, manage global challenges, and adapt fast.

Moving to the UK, I learned a new language, legislation, and business culture - an education in resilience and reinvention.

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

Start before you are ready. The most important part is showing up, learning quickly, and surrounding yourself with people who challenge and support you.

What's been your proudest career achievement to date?

Establishing Scotia Financial Solutions as a trusted partner for businesses across Scotland, while staying true to my values and helping others succeed.

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

The community. People genuinely want to support each other, and there is a sense of pride in building something that lasts.

What was your first job?

Selling handmade crafts at local markets - it taught me to be resourceful and bold.

Who or what inspires you most?

People who overcome adversity and use their experience to lift others.

What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?

"Let's park that." Progress needs decisions, not delays.

How do you relax?

Weight training, long walks, and listening to inspiring audiobooks.

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

I would make confidence and education accessible to everyone - so no one is held back by self-doubt or circumstance.

QUICK-FIRE ROUND

NHS Grampian's Emergency Department first in Scotland to introduce routine blood-borne virus testing

In a Scottish first, NHS Grampian is aiming to save lives by diagnosing blood-borne viruses (BBVs) earlier.

The launch of a new initiative will see patients who have a blood test performed, as part of their care at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary's Emergency Department, tested for BBVs, unless they chose to opt out.

Early detection of Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV can be lifesaving, as they are treatable - but if left undiagnosed can lead to serious illness and, in some cases, death.

The launch comes following a successful pilot last year.

Gareth Patton, consultant in emergency medicine, said: "We found around one-in-180 patients tested had a previously undiagnosed BBV and it allowed us to link that patient to specialist care - in many cases before they were showing any symptoms.

"Patients with BBV infections are often asymptomatic in the early stages, so there are people living with them who aren't aware. The only way to find out if someone has a BBV is to carry out a test.

"Across the globe and locally, there is ongoing transmission of all three BBVs, often with cases of late

diagnosis. Our initiative is part of a Scottish Government drive to eliminate Hepatitis C, end new transmissions of HIV and treat people living with Hepatitis B."

Dr Patton added that the test could have a "significant impact" for patients and the wider community by identifying those unknowingly living with BBVs - without impacting on ED waiting times.

He said: "The project gives our staff an opportunity to make a positive impact by ensuring people are diagnosed and treated far sooner than they otherwise would have been, and it results in no additional time spent in our ED or increased waits for patients."



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Dons heroes bring Scottish Cup to children's hospital

Young patients at Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital got up close with the Scottish Cup in September, when their Dons heroes visited the wards to show off the historic silverware.

The Scottish Cup Trophy Tour, sponsored by Gary Walker Wealth Management, called at the hospital in partnership with The Archie Foundation charity, which supports babies, children and families during a hospital stay or following a bereavement.

The Dons were crowned Scottish Cup winners in May, for the first time since 1990, after beating Celtic 4-3 on penalties at Hampden.

Players Graeme Shinnie, Nicky Devlin, Ante Palaversa and Kevin Nisbet met patients and posed for photos with the trophy.



Prospect 13 joins forces with Concept to mark over three decades in business



Bob Christie and Cerri McDonald

Two Aberdeen-based businesses held a joint celebration to mark company milestones with an exclusive evening at Meldrum House.

Prospect 13 and Concept Promotional Merchandise brought clients, colleagues, friends and family together at Meldrum's Titan Dome, for a glitzy gathering to celebrate a combined 34 years in business.

Marketing agency Prospect 13 marked its seventh birthday, while long-time client Concept Promotional Merchandise toasted an impressive 27 years as one of the North-east's leading branded clothing and promotional products suppliers.

Preserving Aberdeen's cinema heritage through digital innovation

Aberdeen's beloved Belmont Cinema, the city's last remaining independent cinema, is getting a second chance at life thanks to community efforts and cutting-edge digital preservation technology.

ZynQ 360, a global provider of asset visualisation software and services, completed a comprehensive digital capture of the iconic venue ahead of its major refurbishment project.

The project served as both testing and training for the ZynQ 360 team and their way of contributing to the community's mission to save this cultural landmark.

The team navigated the cinema's five floors, documenting everything from vintage movie posters to the building's distinctive "Escher-esque" staircase, the projection rooms and bar area. The result is a complete visual twin delivered through the unique ZynQ platform.

MOTOR MOUTH

After two years of car-free living in Aberdeen's city centre, I didn't expect a compact electric crossover to spark much excitement until I met the Ford Puma Gen-E. Bright yellow, fully electric, and unexpectedly fun, it turned everyday errands into mini adventures. And yes, I got emotionally attached.

Ford calls the colour "Vivid Yellow," but I'd call it "can't-miss-it-in-a-car-park" yellow. It's bold, playful, and guaranteed to brighten your day.

Far from intimidating, the Puma Gen-E welcomed me with a friendly, fuss-free vibe. I even nicknamed her Cruz, after the spirited trainer-turned-racer from Cars 3. Same energy: confident, capable, and full of charm.

Design-wise, the Gen-E is cheeky and confident, more "urban explorer" than "eco warrior." It's compact and stylish, with just enough edge to stand out without shouting about it. Inside, the cabin is clean, tech-forward, and surprisingly spacious. The infotainment system was intuitive and easy to navigate, and all I can say is Pink. Mood. Lighting.

FORD PUMA GEN-E - A ZESTY DYNAMO WITH CITY SWAGGER

By Mackenzie Liddelow
Business Development
Bid Solution Manager
Sodexo

One evening, I went for a drive along the coast with Spotify on, stars above, soft pink glow wrapping around the cabin. It was a date night with myself, the music, and okay... my partner was there too.

Living in a Low Emission Zone, I'd long avoided car ownership. But the Gen-E flipped the script - clean, compact, and city-savvy, it made driving feel effortless. It cruised through LEZ zones guilt-free, parked without drama, and had enough boot space for a full weekly shop. No more praying to the online delivery gods.

Parking? A dream. The compact size, rear camera, and sensors made squeezing into tight spots - reverse parallel parking and tight car parks included - effortless. After a long break from driving, that extra layer of support gave me the confidence I didn't know I needed.

Driving electric for the first time made me nervous, but the Gen-E quickly put me at ease. Smooth take-offs, no rollbacks on hills, and a quiet ride that felt calming rather than clinical. It's not a performance SUV, but it's got enough zip to make city driving feel lively. The regenerative braking took a moment to get used to but soon felt like second nature.



Like me, it's not perfect. The ride can feel a little firm over rough roads, and while the boot is decent, it's not cavernous. But for city living, it's more than enough. The Gen-E isn't trying to be a luxury SUV. It's trying to be useful, stylish, and fun. And it succeeds.

Final verdict? The Ford Puma Gen-E (aka Cruz) is a zesty little dynamo that fits into your life without fuss. Would I have one? Absolutely. I didn't expect to miss it when I handed the keys back... but I did.



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the MEMBER MEET the



Andris Zeps,
Local Business Development Manager,
John Clark Motor Group

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

At John Clark Motor Group, we're not just selling cars; we're building lasting relationships by providing exceptional service and a comprehensive range of quality vehicles across numerous leading

brands. We strive to be the trusted automotive partner for individuals and businesses alike, offering tailored solutions and an unwavering commitment to customer satisfaction throughout their entire vehicle journey.

Who are your customers?

In my role as local business development manager, my customers are primarily businesses of all sizes across various sectors.

This includes sole traders needing a single commercial vehicle, SMEs looking to build or refresh their fleet, and large corporations requiring bespoke fleet management solutions. I also work with public sector organisations, understanding their unique needs and compliance requirements.

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

The automotive industry is currently navigating a period of significant transformation. One of the biggest

challenges is keeping pace with the rapid advancements in electric vehicle technology and the evolving charging infrastructure.

Educating businesses on the benefits and practicalities of transitioning to EVs, while also addressing concerns around range anxiety and charging accessibility, requires a lot of focus and expertise.

The shift towards electrification presents a huge opportunity for John Clark Motor Group.

We are actively investing in training our teams, expanding our EV offerings across our brands, and promoting any partnerships that provide comprehensive charging solutions.

This allows us to position ourselves as a leader in the electric vehicle transition and support our corporate clients in achieving their sustainability goals.



Dr Marina Kovaleva,
Business Development Executive -
Health & Life Sciences,
University of Aberdeen

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Established to serve the North-east of Scotland, the University of Aberdeen has grown into a global leader in higher education and research. Our expertise and

translational research in health and life sciences create tangible value and contribute to economic growth locally, nationally and internationally. By partnering with businesses, we drive innovation, improve health outcomes and help build a strong, sustainable future.

Who are your customers?

We partner with organisations across pharma, medtech, biotech, healthcare, agriculture and beyond - from startups to global enterprises. Whether it's designing innovative clinical trials or delivering advanced nutrition advice, we help industries tackle complex challenges by providing consultancy, training, access to specialist facilities and expert knowledge.

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

While the UK education sector faces challenges, the University has a unique opportunity to leverage its advances in biotechnology,

digital health and clinical innovation. Prioritising strategic partnerships will benefit both industry and innovation, accelerating product development, generating valuable insights and helping companies remain competitive in a rapidly evolving health and life sciences landscape.

What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Collaboration drives innovation. Reach out to explore how our expertise in health and life sciences can help your business overcome challenges, innovate with confidence and deliver real impact for your customers and communities.

What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

The Chamber offers a powerful platform to share insights, build partnerships and strengthen our regional health and life sciences ecosystem - fuelling innovation and driving sustainable growth across the local economy.

MEMBER MEET *the* ME



Jennie McColl,
Regional Operations Manager,
Spectrum Service Solutions

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Spectrum Service Solutions is a multi-award-winning facilities management solutions provider with over 20 years of experience in commercial cleaning throughout the UK. We have a solid presence in the North of Scotland with long-established contracts in Aberdeen, Dundee, and the surrounding areas,

where we provide a full range of cleaning and FM services across most industry sectors. With such a strong client portfolio in the North, we have a full complement of managers, supervisors, cleaners and mobile cleaning teams delivering services daily. In the North of Scotland, we provide all of the services you'd expect from one of Scotland's leading independent, family-owned businesses. We adopt the latest data-driven practices to optimise the delivery of services to ensure you have the correct number of people deployed and the proper service provision in place precisely where and when they are needed.

Who are your customers?

We work across just about every sector from a wide variety of organisations. We provide a full range of contracted and specialist ad-hoc services to offices, factories, warehouses, manufacturing plants, distribution centres, retail parks and visitor centres. We work directly with clients, or with the leading property management companies

and event organisers.

In addition to the commercial cleaning and FM work for industry and commerce, we have a busy events team who provide a range of cleaning and FM services at mass-audience events such as The Open Championship, Hampden Park Stadium and many music festivals throughout Scotland.

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

Like many other sectors, the talent pipeline is a challenge. We want to encourage more young people to explore FM as a career path that offers a variety of opportunities depending on the person's particular skills and interests. In terms of opportunities for Spectrum, we are very optimistic about the future. More people are coming to us to provide the best FM solutions for them. We will continue to explore how AI and robotics might serve us, and our clients well in the future.



Karen Smith,
Owner,
BWC Aberdeen

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

BWC Aberdeen was launched in June 2023 and is an all woman's networking group with over 100 members. We host breakfast meetings, Thirsty Thursdays,

inspirational lunches, leadership conferences and the annual Athena Awards. It's an inspirational and empowering group for all women.

Who are your customers?

Business owners and corporate memberships are available. Our members range from 25 to 76 years of age and come from a diverse range of industry sectors, from accountants to helicopter pilots!

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

We don't appear to be facing any challenges at the moment as the membership costs are purposefully kept low to enable self-employed women the opportunity to join and attend events. The opportunities are endless depending on feedback from the group, we pivot constantly to provide the platform and events they are looking for to grow personally and professionally.

What is your word of advice for fellow Chamber members?

Aberdeen always has been a city that encourages growth and entrepreneurs and I don't see that changing anytime soon. If you are considering becoming self-employed Aberdeen is a great city that embraces networking and makes connecting with likeminded business people easier than other cities in the UK.

What is the best thing about being a Chamber member?

As one of the best Chambers in the UK, the networking and diversity of events is fabulous. The Morning Bulletin in a real bonus, read by thousands and is a great platform to promote your business.

Appointment of new principal at the University of Aberdeen

The University of Aberdeen is pleased to announce that professor Peter Edwards has been appointed as the next principal.

Professor Edwards is a highly respected academic leader who has been spearheading the institution's innovation and entrepreneurial ambitions and driving forward its civic engagement and is the University's acting senior vice-principal and vice-principal for regional engagement.

He will succeed professor George Boyne, who has served as principal since 2018 and will retire on October 31, 2025. The University extends its sincere thanks to professor Boyne for his exceptional leadership over the past seven years.

Under professor Boyne's guidance, the University launched its long-term strategic vision, Aberdeen 2040, which was recognised as University Strategy of the Year by the Higher Education Strategic Planners Association (HESPA) in 2021.

He has steered the institution through significant global challenges, including Brexit, the CV19 pandemic, and the evolving higher education funding landscape.

Professor Boyne has also been a passionate advocate for widening access and community engagement. In a final gesture of generosity, he has requested that his salary for the last two months of his tenure be donated to several local and University-linked charities, including the University Development Trust's Widening Access Fund, the Denis Law Legacy Trust, CFINE, Befriend a Child, and Abernecessities.

The University of Aberdeen look forward to working with Professor Edwards as he leads the University into its next chapter of growth and excellence.



BPerfect launch at Trinity Centre Aberdeen draws huge crowds

BePerfect opened its doors at Trinity Centre Aberdeen in October to an outstanding response from shoppers and beauty fans.

The centre welcomed over 16,000 visitors throughout the day, creating a fantastic buzz across the venue.

Excited customers started queuing from lunchtime in anticipation of the new makeup brand's opening. The entranceway between HMV and Poundland saw footfall increase by a massive 261%, as revellers gathered for the grand opening. Between 3pm and 6pm, more than 8,000 people entered the centre, highlighting the strong interest in BPerfect's arrival.

Brendan McDowell, founder of BPerfect, and special guest Ekin-Su from Love Island joined for the official ribbon

cutting, drawing enthusiastic crowds and adding to the excitement.

BPerfect commented: "This has been the best launch event we've had outside of Ireland. We can't compliment the centre and its customers enough for the incredible support and atmosphere. We're really excited to be coming to Aberdeen - our online sales saw a massive surge from this area, and we knew we had to bring a store to the city."

The opening of BPerfect continues Trinity Centre's mission to deliver top shopping experiences, support local enterprise, and bring exciting new brands to the heart of the city.



Ekin-Su and Brendan McDowell

Creating a culture that supports wellbeing and empowers high performance



Author: Anurag Rai, organisational psychologist and founder, AMHWAL Leadership Academy

“No matter what challenges your organisation faces, the solution is always proactive leadership that engages people to deliver results and outperform market conditions.”

Culture does not begin in HR. It begins with leadership.

Every organisation wants to create a place where people thrive, where wellbeing and performance go hand in hand. But that kind of culture does not happen by accident. It happens when leaders take responsibility for the environment they create. They act like a thermostat that creates the environment and not like a thermometer that reacts to the environment.

People need both support and challenge to grow. Support provides safety. Challenge builds strength. Without support, people burn out. Without challenge, they stop growing. The real skill of leadership lies in finding the right balance between the two. It means leading with kindness and with candour.

Kindness in leadership is not about being soft. It is about treating people as humans first. It is about understanding what they need, listening with empathy, and creating a space where they feel safe to be honest. Kind leaders build trust. They check in, not only on tasks but on wellbeing. They make people feel seen, valued, and capable.

Candour is just as important. It means being honest, setting clear expectations, giving feedback that helps people improve, and creating strong agreements to hold them accountable. Leaders who lead with candour are not afraid to have the difficult conversations. They care enough to challenge others to be their best.

At AMHWAL Leadership Academy, we often talk about the “kindness and candour balance.” The best leaders combine both. They use kindness to build psychological safety and candour to drive performance. They do not protect people from discomfort; they help them grow through it.

When leaders find this balance, the whole organisation benefits. Teams become more resilient. Communication becomes more open. People start performing not because they fear failure but because they want to contribute to something meaningful.

Leadership is not about control or authority. It is about enabling others to succeed. It is about asking, “What kind of environment am I creating?” rather than “What is wrong with my team?” Culture reflects leadership. When leaders show care, courage, and consistency, those behaviours spread through the organisation.

In today’s world, organisations do not just need good strategies. They need good leaders. Leaders who are kind enough to support and brave enough to challenge will always bring out the best in people.

So take a moment to reflect. Are you leading with kindness that supports and candour that challenges?

Because when you get that balance right, you do not just create better results. You create better people.

WORDS OF ADVICE



Isabel Lockhart,
*Celebrant and Celebrant Trainer,
Legacy*

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

If you have ever been to a ceremony and have left feeling underwhelmed by it, then it wasn't one of mine! I'm Isabel Lockhart, and I bring magic to celebrations! I'm a celebrant who crafts incredibly personal and joyful ceremonies because life's big moments deserve to be celebrated with real heart. But that's not all! I also love sharing my passion and expertise by training other celebrants, helping them bring that same magic to their own ceremonies. So, whether you need a vibrant,

unboring celebrant or want to become one, I'm your quine!

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

I only have to manage myself, and that can be quite an undertaking! I juggle planning, creating unboring ceremonies, and training with a dash of 'let's make this fun'. It's all about staying organised, learning loads, and remembering to recharge. My week starts with a business development call to set me up for the week and hold me accountable.

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

My limiting thoughts and beliefs were the biggest barriers. By networking and surrounding myself with a supportive community of cheerleaders and an awesome satnav - my business coach - I broke through these barriers and became unapologetically, authentically me! Getting out of my way was the biggest challenge.

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

"You're braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think." - Christopher Robin. We all need to remember this.



Steve Johnson,
*Director,
Paratus Commercial Services*

Give us the elevator pitch for your business.

Paratus supports customers and suppliers to do business based on value, not just price. Using our tools and techniques, businesses can win more profitable contracts, extract greater value from supply chains beyond price reductions, and avoid financial and

reputational losses from missed revenue opportunities, unrecovered costs, and costly commercial disputes.

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

REME apprenticeship with operational project experience plus formal commercial qualifications at MSC level, bridging commercial and operational disciplines through people-oriented engagement. This results in clearer scopes and enhanced delivery across the extended supply chain. The 'us and them' that can exist between commercial and operational teams doesn't help any businesses long-term.

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

Being pigeon-holed as 'the procurement guy'. Closer engagement with technical and operational teams, including offshore and onshore site visits, and using supportive language whilst trying to highlight my technical credentials. Getting out of my office more helped.

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

You have two ears and one mouth. Use them in that ratio.

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to discover more.



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- Energy Logistics Specialists
- Global Reach, Local Strength

‘It’s like Heat magazine for nerds’

Premier League lawyer explains the importance of keeping up to speed with employment law

By Danny McKay

Annual Employment Law Conference speaker Sean Jones KC has done it all, representing all manner of companies from Aston Villa and Everton in disputes with players, managers and staff, to Amazon, EasyJet, HMRC and the Met Police.

When it comes to the finer legal intricacies of employment law, if Sean doesn’t know it, it isn’t worth knowing.

Ahead of his appearance as speaker at AGCC’s Annual Employment Law Conference - organised in partnership with sponsors Pinsent Masons and Burness Paull - Sean set out how important the area of law is.

He said: “Employment law is important in lots of really significant ways. If you think about discrimination law, it has been an engine for social change, so the law has constantly been ahead of where we were socially.

“When I came to the bar back in 1991 you still had people who would, when you had a redundancy exercise, sack the women on the basis they were much less likely to be bread-winners and fewer families would be going without earnings.

“Still today I’m doing a lot of equal pay law and people find it difficult to get their heads around the notation that men and women should earn the same money for the same work - but it’s more widely accepted than it was.

“Those laws went ahead of where society was.

“Employment law has a social importance, but it also has a political importance.

“It’s one of those areas, a bit like tax law, that no government leaves alone. In every manifesto there’s always some change proposed.”

Sean explained Conservative governments tend to be “intensely suspicious” of collective employment rights and see them as a “burden on business”.

He continued: “Mrs Thatcher made it harder to strike, then Boris Johnson made it harder to strike, so Conservative administrations tend not to favour collective employment rights.”

While the Conservatives had increased the period of time a worker had to have been employed before they could raise an unfair dismissal claim, the current Labour government is bringing that down and is generally more “union friendly”.

Sean went on: “There’s a sort of ebb and flow as administrations change. There are areas of employment law that everyone wants to get involved in a re-legislate.”

You’ll struggle to find many people more passionate about employment law than Sean, who made an interesting comparison to sum up his enthusiasm.

“When I’m trying to sell employment law to pupils and applicants to become lawyers, I always say it’s like Heat magazine for nerds. It’s just fantastic,” he said.

“It’s ultimately people, so the disputes tend to be fascinating. You get a window into other lives and other working environments.

“As an employment barrister you might have to know everything about working on an oil rig on Monday, and by Friday you’re dealing with sacking a football manager.

“That range of human activity is just fascinating and it endlessly cycles past you when you’re doing this job.

“Almost every day there’s something new and interesting.”

Sean was a speaker at last year’s Employment Law Conference, which he described as an “excellent” event, and set out what attendees can expect this time round.

He said: “There will be quite a bit about the Employment Rights Bill which is creeping towards coming into force and produces some really very substantial changes - for instance, to unfair dismissal.

“There’ll be quite a bit about online culture wars which are now expressing themselves in complicated, intractable and heated employment disputes - so sort of freedom of speech at work issues.

‘naughty footballers’

“Generally anything of note which has happened in the last 12 months, and anything that’s about to happen, we will deal with.

“What I like most about Employment law is it changes rapidly and there’s lots of it. But on the flipside of that is, if it is your job to make sure that the company for which you work always stays on the right side of the law, to some extent you’re constantly running after the law as it develops.

“You need to understand what has happened because it’s just too easy to get something wrong. And if you do get something wrong the consequences can be very significant.”

Turning to his own career, Sean said: “I’m probably still doing the biggest case I’ve ever done. I’m representing about 12,000 claimants in the Tesco equal pay litigation.

“The employees have been divided into three tranches and we are two-thirds of the way through dealing with the first tranche after seven years. It is immense as a case, but it’s worth potentially such an enormous compensation bill.”

Cases involving “naughty footballers” have also often proved memorable for Sean – for a variety of reasons.

He said: “I did a case for Newcastle United and ex-manager Alan Pardew came to give evidence and the bit I remember most of all is him moaning about how tight his shoes were.

“I also did a football case against Leeds United and a solicitor called me a ‘f***ing c***’ in court. That was something of a highlight. The judge nearly had a heart attack. We had an adjournment while he apologised to me.”

In another memorable moment, Sean almost found himself arrested while watching court proceedings from the public gallery as a student and doodling in his notepad.

Sean had absent mindedly drawn a picture of the judge, who spotted him scribbling away and sent his usher to retrieve the notebook.

He said: “I’m crapping myself up in the public gallery and the judge takes a look at it and says ‘this is rather good... but you mustn’t draw me under any circumstances – it’s a criminal offence’.

“I said I understood and he said ‘thank you very much, I’m going to keep this’.”



BOOK NOW



Sean Jones KC

£24,000 raised at Jet Set Spin at Aberdeen International Airport for AberNecessities and Sport Aberdeen

Aberdeen International Airport in partnership with AberNecessities and Sport Aberdeen have raised £24,000 hosting the unique Jet Set Spin.

Believed to be Europe's first-ever spin class held on an active airport airfield, the event took place on Friday, September 26.

The high-energy event brought together 20 well-known faces from across the North-east to raise vital funds for Sport Aberdeen and AberNecessities.

Set against the dramatic backdrop of a live airfield, participants pedalled through a near hour long spin session while aircraft and helicopters continued to take off and land around them.

The event ran from 12:30 to 16:00 and offered a once-in-a-lifetime experience that blended adrenaline, purpose, and community spirit.

Each participant aimed to raise as much money as possible to secure their "boarding pass" for the event, with all proceeds going toward AberNecessities' mission to provide essential items for children living in poverty, and Sport Aberdeen's SPACE programme, which supports care-experienced young people through physical activity.

Robert Paterson, head of operations at Aberdeen International Airport, who also took part, said: "Hosting a spin class on an airfield, right next to an active runway

takes a lot of organisation so I want to thank the team for their brilliant work to allow us to raise an incredible amount for the two charities."

Danielle Flecher-Horn, founder of AberNecessities, said: "As Aberdeen International Airport's Charity Partner, we were incredibly grateful to be invited to be part of this wonderfully, unique event alongside our friends at Sport Aberdeen.

"We have been completely overwhelmed, not only by the fantastic amount of funds raised, but by the collective effort of the three organisations to make this inaugural event a 'high-flying' success. It really was a day to remember that will make an incredible difference to children in our local community.

"We can't thank the Jet Set Squad enough for 'pedalling with purpose' and those who donated to ensure that we can continue to gift the essential and basic necessities that 'No Child Should Go Without'."

Keith Heslop, chief executive of Sport Aberdeen, said: "I'm absolutely delighted with the incredible support we've had from our local community, you've really got behind this in true Aberdeen style!

"It's humbling to be part of such an amazing team effort, and on behalf of everyone at Sport Aberdeen, a big heartfelt thank you to each and every person involved."



100-year-old D-Day veteran awarded honorary degree

The University of Aberdeen has honoured one of Scotland's last surviving D-Day veterans with an honorary degree.

Jim Glennie, who turned 100 this year, was presented with a Master of the University (MUniv) at a special ceremony in October 14 at King's College Chapel.

During the ceremony Mr Glennie laid a wreath at the University's War Memorial to honour the sacrifices made by those who have died in conflict.

To mark the celebrations Her Majesty the Queen and Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen wrote a personal message to Mr Glennie, in recognition of his military service, his support for the Gordon Highlanders Museum and his dedication to educating others about the sacrifices made during the Second World War.

Born in Turriff, Mr Glennie was just 18 years old when he became one of the first Gordon Highlanders to land on Normandy's beaches in 1944.

After being called up, he enlisted in the army and began his military service at the Bridge of Don Barracks in Aberdeen, before being sent to the front line to take part in Operation Overlord, the largest seaborne invasion in history.

He landed with the battalion at Sword Beach on June 6, 1944. Under intense fire, he helped comrades who couldn't

swim reach the shore. But just two weeks later, after his company was ambushed, he was shot in the arm and shoulder. Following his recovery in hospital, Mr Glennie spent the rest of the war in prisoner of war camp, Stalag IV-B in Germany.

After the end of the war, he returned to Turriff where he became a welder, working both onshore and offshore. He married his wife Winifred in 1953, with whom he had two children.

His connection to his service didn't end with the Second World War: he has spent more than 30 years volunteering at the Gordon Highlanders Museum in Aberdeen, sharing stories with generations of visitors about his own wartime.



Concern for North Sea roles as Petrofac files for administration

Petrofac has applied to the High Court in London to appoint administrators to its parent company, in a move that throws the future of 2,000 North Sea jobs into uncertainty.

The decision marks a dramatic low point for the one-time FTSE 100 giant, which was valued at £6billion at its peak in 2012 but saw its shares suspended in May after collapsing to just £20million.

In a statement to the market, Petrofac said it had "carefully assessed its options" following last week's decision by Dutch grid operator TenneT to terminate a major offshore wind contract.

The company's directors have now filed to appoint administrators to Petrofac Limited, the group's ultimate holding company.

The company stressed that this is a "targeted administration" affecting only the holding company, with trading operations expected to continue while restructuring and merger options are explored.

Petrofac said it retains the support of key creditors — including an ad hoc group of noteholders and its revolving credit and term loan lenders — who are maintaining forbearance agreements and extending loan maturities "on a rolling basis".

Advisers from consultancy Teneo are expected to oversee the process, with administrators working alongside Petrofac's executive management "to preserve value, operational capability and ongoing delivery" across its subsidiaries.

BUSINESS LESSONS I'VE LEARNED



Keith Heslop,
Chief Executive Officer
Sport Aberdeen

Who has been the biggest influence on your career?

My folks. Before retiring, both of my parents had a very strong work ethic and pushed my brother and I hard in order to succeed, working literally night and day to improve our chances of success. My old man worked on a shop floor most of his career and after working with him for a short period of time, I realised that becoming an accountant was far more appealing to me.

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

One of my first bosses advised me that you are only here once, so have fun whilst doing what you do. If you hate your job, do something else – your life is too precious to be miserable. Hopefully those who know me would agree that I work hard and set high expectations, but we still manage to have great laughs along the way.

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

Challenge your comfort zone. After working in energy, agriculture and the sport and leisure industries, I am a great believer that your experiences and skills are transferable across business sectors. Don't sell yourself short and feel pigeonholed into a particular sector simply because of what you have done in the past. Feel the fear and do it anyway!

What's been your proudest career achievement to date?

Becoming CEO of Sport Aberdeen. Most people are aware that we have an amazing team who run our venues. But in addition to that, and certainly less well known, is that we spend huge resources to support, care and nurture others including care experienced young people and individuals with long term health conditions. Our staff really do make a huge difference in promoting and supporting physical and mental well-being in the North-east, and I'm proud to help them deliver the kind of life-changing support that truly makes a difference in people's lives.

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

As a charity, we are lucky to operate in such a great city. The North-east is home to many successful businesses led by people who are genuinely community-focused and eager to get involved. There's a strong culture of supporting initiatives that benefit both young people and those later in life. Most companies here go above and beyond to help out where they can, and the community spirit makes a real difference.

What was your first job?

Worked in an ice-cream van in Bridge of Don and Seaton at age 13.

Who or what inspires you most?

Motivational speakers – surprising even myself, I listened to ex-England manager Gareth Southgate recently as he talked about his personal journey as a leader and the importance of belief and resilience. It was an incredible listen and I recommend taking the time out to watch online.

What word or phrase in business-speak exasperates you?

A 'whole system approach' which usually means the project will grow arms and legs and become unmanageable.

How do you relax?

Spending time with my family and playing golf, preferably in the sunshine.

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

Cast a spell so every kid experiences a wonderful, happy and fulfilling childhood.

QUICK-FIRE ROUND

Spotlight shines on Peterson Energy Logistics as they join Aberdeen Performing Arts Ovation Club

Aberdeen Performing Arts has welcomed Peterson Energy Logistics as the inaugural member of their Ovation Club, marking a partnership between the two which will build on a shared vision recognising the vital role of the arts in the region.

The Ovation Club, launched by the arts charity earlier this year, provides opportunities for businesses and individuals to be part of the continued success of the arts and culture sector in Aberdeen, supporting work at His Majesty's Theatre, the Music Hall and the Lemon Tree as well as a year-round programme of festivals including the Aberdeen Comedy Festival, Granite Noir and Light the Blue.

All funds raised through the Ovation Club will directly support Aberdeen Performing Arts' outreach work with communities across the region, providing meaningful cultural experiences that connect, inspire and empower, and creating a significant platform to ensure cultural access remains open, inclusive and accessible to everyone.

Logistics and supply chain solutions company Peterson, which has its UK corporate headquarters in Aberdeen city centre, enjoyed a unique range of Ovation Club benefits, including an exclusive backstage tour of the historic His Majesty's Theatre for staff, with other perks including a

pre-theatre dinner and seats in the venue's Royal Boxes for up to four times per year, use of the iconic HMT and Music Hall stages for networking events, invites to special events including receptions, openings and previews and more.

Aberdeen Performing Arts chief executive, Sharon Burgess, said: "We are delighted to welcome Peterson Energy Logistics to the Aberdeen Performing Arts family as the newest member of the Ovation Club.

"As a charity and one of Scotland's leading arts organisations, we are deeply committed to making the arts accessible to all – enriching the cultural life of the North-east through grassroots opportunities and by bringing world-class performances to our stages.

"The Ovation Club plays a vital role in helping us deliver that mission. Support from companies like Peterson Energy Logistics enables us to extend our reach, deepen our impact, and provide creative experiences that truly make a difference in the communities we serve."





Aby Wilson

Bethan Customs Consultancy is delighted to announce the return of Aby Wilson as office manager. Aby originally joined Bethan in 2017 as the company's second employee and has played an important role in its growth over the years.



Left to right: Andrew Forsyth and Grant Morrison

Grant Morrison

RSM UK has appointed Grant Morrison as its new office managing partner in Aberdeen. Since joining RSM in 2021 as an audit partner, Grant has led and built the firm's audit practice in Aberdeen and also leads RSM's oil and gas sector team across the UK.



Piotr Jachym

AKR Fitness has strengthened its coaching team with the addition of Piotr Jachym, who brings over 10 years of experience in the fitness industry. Piotr has worked across personal training, group coaching, and specialist exercise programmes.



Back L-R - Niamh Angus-Hankin, Matt Fraser.
Front L-R - Mark Pirie, Scott Robb

Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace LLP

Raeburn Christie Clark & Wallace LLP (Raeburns) has strengthened its commitment to developing local legal talent with the recruitment of four new trainee solicitors. Mark Pirie, Matt Fraser, Niamh Angus-Hankin and Scott Robb have now begun their traineeships with the firm.



Kola Otekalu

Ashtead Technology has appointed Kola Otekalu as HR director. In her new role, Kola will lead the company's human resources strategy with a focus on enhancing employee engagement, driving talent development and strengthening organisational capability.



Martha Gavan

TechFest has appointed Martha Gavan as its new managing director to drive the charity's mission of inspiring young people to engage with STEM across Scotland. Martha brings more than seven years' experience of working at TechFest to the role, including four years as its deputy managing director.



Robbie Chisholm

Johnston Carmichael Wealth has strengthened its team with the appointment of Robbie Chisholm as a financial planner. In his new role he will manage a portfolio of both individual high-net worth and corporate clients, developing planning strategies to help them secure their financial goals.



Ross MacRae

Port of Aberdeen has appointed Ross MacRae as its new financial controller, strengthening the organisation's commitment to strong financial governance and long-term sustainable growth. In his new role, Ross is responsible for the day-to-day leadership of the finance department.



Tim Lagraauw and Evan Urquhart

Whisky Hammer has made its first two appointments in Europe as it launches its first operational base in South Holland. The company has appointed Tim Lagraauw (general manager) and Evan Urquhart (auction manager) to spearhead the new venture.



Professor Shantini Paranjothy

NHS Grampian has appointed Professor Shantini Paranjothy as director of public health. Following completion of her public health training, she worked for Public Health Wales and was a Professor of Preventative Medicine at Cardiff University.



Roy Geddes MC

Erskine Veterans Charity, Scotland's leading veterans charity, has appointed decorated RAF veteran, Roy Geddes MC, as regional manager for its Veterans Activity Centres (EVACs) across Scotland.



Andrew Spence and Maia Jamieson

Aberdeen's renowned family-run jeweller Jamieson & Carry has expanded its in-house marketing team with the appointment of Andrew Spence as marketing manager and Maia Jamieson as marketing assistant.



Frank Matini

Following a full-time industry placement, Balfour Beatty has welcomed Robert Gordon University (RGU) student, Frank Matini, to the team based at their Westhill office in Aberdeenshire.



Justin Stead

Walker's Shortbread, the world-renowned family-owned shortbread producer, has appointed Justin Stead as the company's new chair. Justin has decades of experience leading and working with global consumer brands and a proven track record of strategic and innovative leadership.



Mobesher Ahmmad

Mobesher Ahmmad has joined the Cadherent team as a senior engineer, to support its capabilities in pressure system design to ASME and Pressure Equipment Directive (PED), advanced Finite Element Analysis and the application of international engineering standards.



Peter Davidson

Aberdeen FC Community Trust (AFCCT) has appointed Peter Davidson as its new chief executive. A lifelong Dons fan, Peter emerged as the outstanding candidate from an extensive search process and will succeed Liz Bowie, who stepped down in September after five years of exceptional service.



REACH FOR THE CROWN



THE LAND-DWELLER

Jamieson & Carry

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