



Good news all round!

Following on from our recent successful Harbour Stakeholders meeting, the Board are pleased to announce that the following projects are about to come to fruition, thus helping us plan for a brighter and more prosperous future for the Harbour:

River Harbour-Fishing Facilities

Within the last two weeks the Scottish Executive has confirmed 100% grant aid for Phase 1 of 3 phases of our Fishing Facilities Development. This includes dredging the Approach Channel to remove the sandbar and restore twenty four hour access to River Harbour at a minimum depth of 5 metres. Tagged on to this is repair of damage sustained during the February storm, mainly the replacement of the North Cardinal Mark in the Bay ('the Flaggie'), and other minor items. Tenders will be issued shortly and the works should progress in early summer. This is a major boost to attracting larger fishing and commercial vessels, and will restore full access to deepwater berths, last dredged seventeen years ago.



Marina Phase 1

We have now ordered 100 metres of marina pontoon and an access gangway from Varis Engineering in Forres, for installation along the face of the Jetty in the Outer Harbour. Varis have wide experience in pontoon manufacture and installation throughout the UK and Ireland with excellent references from many of the Scottish sites. This development has been made possible with assistance from HIE Caithness and Sutherland, Highland Council, and European funds (CED), and we are indeed indebted to them for their support and assistance. Installation is planned to be for summer berthing only and will be lifted out in winter. The pontoons will be in place within the next two months, so will be available for Wick HarbourFest to host the Moray Firth Flotilla on 22nd - 24th June.



Marina Phase 2

Draft plans and business case for Phase 2 are well in hand and funding sources are being researched with a view to having the installation in place for 2008. There will be approx 70 berths, serviced with power, water and wi-fi computer link facilities, accessed by a gangway with a security gate. The local CCTV system will also cover this area from a new camera to be installed near the Fishmart in the next few weeks. In addition the Fishmart will be significantly redeveloped to provide enhanced reception and rest room facilities, toilets, showers, laundry services and the potential relocation of the Harbour office.



Cargoes

- ❖ Timber export to Finland should resume shortly and continue over the summer, this will provide a welcome increase in revenue.
- ❖ A successful trial run has been done recently for taking wind turbine towers through the town and out Thurso Street, and we look forward to this happening later in the year.
- ❖ The recent 23rd and 24th Rounds of Oil Block Awards have seen several areas allocated very close to Wick and exploration drilling has already started and will continue on various Blocks for the next year. We are working very hard to attract new business, and the deepened River approach channel will ensure twenty four hour movement for survey, supply, and cargo vessels.



Slipway

The Board have reluctantly concluded that the costs of repairing the underwater rails on the slipway effectively rule out bringing it back into use, and we are now seeking buyers for the main cradle. Our insurers have also ruled out any attempt to have it restored to use at a lower tonnage rating.

Wick Harbourfest

Due to be held from 22nd to 24th June to host the Moray Firth Flotilla, this is now developing into a major event similar to the annual Portsoy Boat Festival. Under the umbrella of the Caithness Partnership, the Event Management Committee are holding regular meetings, and anyone wishing to help or book stalls, displays, etc, should contact David Richard-Jones on 01955 603821 / 07766 056372 or email harbourfest@btopenworld.com



Isabella Fortuna

Over thirty traditional sailing vessels have already booked, eg, the Swan, Reaper, Isabella, etc, and will be accompanied by a large number of modern yachts. A huge programme of entertainment and displays is being arranged and Wick Lifeboat Day will also be taking place. The Flotilla will leave on Sunday morning after the 'Blessing of the Fleet' to call in at several harbours down the coast, finishing up at Portsoy the following weekend. This should be quite a spectacle and certainly not to be missed. Would be nice to think this could become a regular event on a smaller scale but we are unlikely to see such a large gathering of old boats again.

See event websites www.caithness.org/wickharbourfest and www.wickheritage.org/flotilla/



Reaper

Message from the Board

After twenty one months of serious effort there is more than just an air of optimism around the Harbour. We believe that with the support of all harbour users Wick harbour will once again become the vibrant place it used to be. This desire was reinforced and greeted with unilateral support at the recent Stakeholders meeting. The projects highlighted above, will indeed kick start the regeneration of Wick Harbour and produce much needed revenue, employment, business and property development opportunities. This however is only the beginning and these projects provide financial stepping stones to a much greater goal. This goal will provide significant Socio Economic opportunities for Caithness to help offset the loss of employment from Dounreay. Combined with recent retail and housing/office developments and the activities of Wick 21, Pulteneytown Peoples Project, and Lower Pulteney Regeneration Initiative, there is certainly an exciting future ahead for Wick in which the harbour will play a vital role. Our ambitious and far reaching plans will undoubtedly provide a very important part of the future economic puzzle facing Caithness.