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**April 2021**

Dear Stakeholder,

Spring 2021 sees us reflecting on 2020 which was a very different year for us all.

Wick Harbour, in common with most businesses in the country, has felt the adverse effects of the Coronavirus pandemic and as a result, a reduction in harbour activity and income was seen during 2020.

The Covid19 pandemic presented us all with significant new challenges but the harbour remained open throughout. Along with many other businesses we have had to make changes to our working practices and procedures to continue to work in a safe and efficient way. We hope that with the vaccination process now well underway in Scotland we will soon see restrictions relaxed and a return to our normal business levels.

### **FISHING**

Fish & shellfish landings by value have decreased due to the Covid 19 pandemic. Many markets for shellfish have disappeared with prices severely affected. The new Marine Fund Scotland has recently been launched March 2021 . For more information on the fund please follow the attached link : <https://blogs.gov.scot/marine-scotland/2021/03/20/new-marine-fund-scotland-launches/> or visit the Scottish Government Marine and Fisheries web page.

## **OFFSHORE WIND**

In common with the harbour, operations on Beatrice Windfarm were also adversely affected by the covid pandemic. Much of their summer 2020 maintenance campaign had to be cancelled, but hopefully this work will resume during late spring/summer 2021 which will bring additional vessels to the harbour . At present 4 CTVs are operational with a further vessel due to arrive mid April.



Construction on the Moray East windfarm has gathered pace and there is a hive of activity on the windfarm. Although Fraserburgh was selected as the O&M base for this project Wick Harbour has also benefited to a degree with construction vessels working from the harbour and vessels using Wick as their preferred bunkering port. The MHO Gurli has recently joined the construction fleet and has been visiting Wick regularly for cargo operations and bunkering. They are supported in their operations by local supply chain companies Northern Marine Services, Hugh Simpson Contractors and Simpson Oils - great collaboration between local firms – providing quick turnaround and minimal disruption out at the windfarm site for the customer.



*Aquata*



*MHO Gurli*

## **SCOTWIND LEASING**

Wick Harbour Authority are encouraged by the high number of enquiries that we are receiving from various companies interested in this latest leasing round. Our geographical proximity to some of the sites scoped remains a key and much valued benefit to potential customers .

Our location, a strong and cohesive supply chain (based in and near the harbour), easy bunkering and available space, presents Wick strongly as a go to port for the rapidly developing industry.



## **MARINA & LEISURE**

The marina currently remains closed to visiting yachts along with our showers and toilets. We are hopeful of a full return to sailing this season and await further guidance on relaxation of restrictions from Scottish Government. As soon as is safe to do so we will be open and ready to welcome visitors from near and far. Local leisure users are already working on their boats, socially distanced, attending to the usual maintenance tasks such as painting, engine work and washing. It is hoped that the summer season "lift in" of small boats will be able to take place as usual towards the end of April. ***Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for updates.***

## **AIRPORT**

Caithness Chamber of Commerce spearheaded a strong campaign over a number of months to push for a Public Service Obligation for Wick Airport . As part of the Stakeholders Group Wick Harbour have continued to highlight how important the airport is to the community and our customers in the Offshore Renewables industry . We are delighted to report that a PSO has now been finalised and we look forward to the resumption of flights in the near future.

## **HARBOUR IMPROVEMENTS**

Work to replace the marina decking was finished during 2020. We also took the opportunity to renew the services at the same time. Concreting works have taken place over at the Commercial Quay entrance with the removal of the retaining wall bordering the old slipway area. These works have resulted in a large expanse of quay space now available for laydown and for the turning of vehicles involved in large scale cargo manoeuvres. A new kiosk is now located in this area and an electronic barrier will be installed sometime during 2021. This improvement will ensure that un-authorized access to Commercial Quay is greatly reduced. Almost 1600 metres of new metal kerbing has been renewed around harbour quays.



## **BUILDING PORT CAPACITY & THE HIGH WATER PROTECTION GATE**

The catalyst for increasing safe berthing port capacity is the High Water Protection Gate. Progress has been slower than anticipated due to a variety of circumstances, not least Covid 19 , however, we are still advancing and a firm of Business Consultants has completed a wide ranging review of the benefits the gate will bring to Wick Harbour and the wider community. The scheme has been fully designed and approved as suitable for purpose and the Business Case is now with funding agencies for consideration.



## **HIGHLANDS & ISLAND ENERGY AWARDS 2021**

The team here at Wick were absolutely delighted to receive the award for Best Offshore Renewable Project at the recent Highlands and Islands Energy Awards.



The positive impact the Beatrice offshore wind farm development has had at Wick and throughout the wider Caithness economy cannot be overstated and it has been the catalyst for a number of new businesses locally who are now operating in support of the offshore renewables industry. One such new entrant is Northern Marine Services who provide Loler Inspections, Marine Client Representation and Lifting Services. A strong supply chain also exists locally with many local engineering businesses such as Gows of Lybster, Calder Engineering and JGC Technical Services Ltd already supporting offshore renewables projects. Well established firms such as Simpson Oils and Hugh Simpson Contractors ( northern Scotland`s leading lifting and plant hire company ) are located here at the harbour . They remain focused in offering their clients effective and efficient solutions to their business needs.

Chairman of Highland Councils Caithness Committee said "This is fantastic and well-deserved recognition for Wick harbour," Councillor Sinclair said. "My thanks and congratulations to Wick Harbour Authority for having the vision and ambition to transform the area."

"As we look to regenerate the town centre, the success at the harbour is a note of hope about what can be achieved with the right strategy."

"We now have a significant opportunity to maximise the harbour as a port, and to diversify and recover the Caithness economy – and the growth of renewables is an important component of that."

"I look forward to continuing to work alongside local stakeholders to achieve the next steps, including the protection gate, which could have a significant benefit in terms of increasing activity at the harbour."

## **OUTLOOK**

The business outlook for Wick Harbour remains buoyant, although 2021 could still prove to be a challenging year. We remain upbeat and look forward to an upturn in the fortunes of the fishing industry and a return to normal business on the marina. Hopefully windfarm traffic will increase as the year goes on and we will see a number of vessels added to the maintenance fleet .

***As ever, please do not hesitate to contact the team here at Wick should you wish to discuss anything further.***

*Malcolm Bremner*

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