

## Marine Energy – The Future for Wick Harbour?

Activity is now increasing on this front with companies preparing applications for planning consent for submission next year, for the Beatrice and Moray Offshore windfarms, both very close to Wick. Meygen have a tidal turbine on test in Orkney, for their development in the Inner Sound, off Huna, and Scottish Power are developing their plans for tidal generation at the Ness of Duncansby. Our main interest is in the windfarms shown on the plan below, where construction is likely to start in 2014/15, and several meetings have taken place with the developers, with a view to establishing an Operations and Maintenance base here. There will also be opportunities for business during the Construction phases, but the main vessels and hardware involved will probably be too big for us to handle. That said, our Engineers are currently finalising a Feasibility Study into major improvements which could transform our capabilities. The windfarms will cost around £4bn, so the business from 25 years of maintenance of 400 turbines is not to be underestimated.



Potentially, dozens of quality jobs could be created onshore and offshore for technicians and boat crews, with added spin-off for other local businesses like Wick Airport, UHI, engineering companies and transport operators. So it's all to play for and it's crucial we have the wholehearted support of our local politicians and development agencies. There will be enough business around in a few years time that no single port will be able to deal with it, and it all augurs well for the Caithness economy, given the run-down in other areas.

See [www.wickharbour.co.uk](http://www.wickharbour.co.uk) –Energy, for the latest on these developments.

## Feasibility Study

Earlier this year, and in anticipation of Renewables business, we commissioned an Engineering Study into major harbour improvements, and this is due for delivery soon. Once analysed, we shall start pushing funding as well as contracts/partnerships with some of the main players in the Renewables developments.

## Marina – Join the Queue!

Although visitor numbers are down slightly this year this is no surprise given the poor summer, and other marinas and tourist venues have a similar experience. However, the good news is that those arriving here have tended to stay longer, therefore spending more locally. Furthermore we had all our resident berths (56) booked for the season, so there is now a waiting list! By relocating some smaller vessels we hope to create a few extra berths to satisfy demand. Eighteen new owners now have boats in Wick, attracted by easy access and secure berthing. Most people appreciate how the marina has enhanced the area and boosted local businesses.

Nationality	2010	2011
UK	202	131
Netherlands	27	20
Norway	11	18
Germany	13	16
France	7	10
Sweden	5	7
Ireland	4	6
Denmark	3	4
Others	18	9
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>	<b>221</b>
Crew	777	649
Days in Port	462	404

## Board Members

Willie Watt and Hugh Simpson stood down in accordance with the annual rotation process, and were the only applicants to a public advert, so both have been reappointed to serve for another three years. Since then Willie and Gordon Doull have been re-elected as Chairman and Vice Chairman.

## Harbourfest 2012

The Harbourfest Committee are well under way with planning another event on 15,16,17<sup>th</sup> June 2012, which promises to be bigger and better than last time. Initial plans and the theme for 2012 are outlined on [www.wickharbour.co.uk](http://www.wickharbour.co.uk) Anyone with ideas for inclusion should email [harbourfest@btopenworld.com](mailto:harbourfest@btopenworld.com)

## Subsea7

Business is good at Wester these days and we have seen a number of towheads landed here and transported to site this year. A major heavy lift took place in May when two, five hundred tonne mobile cranes offloaded a two hundred tonne towhead on the North River Pier. Heavier ones up to 400 tonnes have been skidded ashore but this was a huge lift. More are expected in January, and these provide a welcome boost in revenue for the Harbour.



## North Highland Initiative

The Board are delighted to have this prestigious local business as a new tenant in our Harbour Office complex, and their unit was officially opened on 28<sup>th</sup> November by Alex Neil, Scottish Government Minister for Infrastructure and Capital Investment. We took the opportunity to update the Minister on our own plans for the future and also other local transport improvements needed to improve Caithness accessibility.

## The World

The recent visit of the famous cruise ship proved to be a great success for both the town and the ship's residents, who came ashore via the Marina and generated plenty visitors from outwith Wick to view the vessel lying at the mouth of the bay. The Captain was delighted with visit and hinted that they could be back in a couple of years time. Word will get around and it could encourage others to come and see us.

## The Cannon

The Council and the Community Council have approved us moving the 'lost' Cannon from the Riverside to a site at the Harbour. From 1881 it was the Harbour Fog Signal for many years, and after being refurbished this winter it will be placed on a plinth on the quayside in the Spring. Given the amount of visitors around the Harbour in summer it should prove an added attraction to our heritage.

## Message from the Board

This year has seen our business grow on both the leisure and commercial fronts, with the Marina being full up two years before we anticipated in our Business Plan, and fishing and cargo trade increasing. This is a welcome trend and it has enabled us to turn a 'profit', albeit small, for the first time in ten years. Being a public body with no shareholders and a voluntary Board, any monies generated are reinvested in port improvements. We are confident that next year will see some good news from the Offshore Energy Developers which will augur well for local business and jobs, but we have to keep working hard to broadcast the advantages that Wick has to offer, because there is a lot of competition out there for this lucrative market.

**Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to All.**