

Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER continues to enhance local facilities

Five new LEADER projects have been awarded funding by the Aberdeenshire LEADER Local Action Group (LAG) at its September meeting, resulting in full commitment of the current available budget.

The Round 13 projects will enhance Aberdeenshire's recreational, sporting and tourist facilities and provide an important legacy for rural communities.

The combined award of the projects from Round 13 was £317,186 for the five projects, with total costs of £2,731,406.

These include a revitalisation programme for a community hall in Longside, a major enhancement of Haddo Country Park, a study for a potential traditional boatbuilding facility in Portsoy, a new community sport facility and pavilion in Newburgh and the construction of a new village hall for Daviot.

Belinda Miller, Rural Aberdeenshire LAG Chairperson, said: "The projects approved in Round 13 of the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER programme show a clear commitment to the enhancement of community facilities in the area.

"The five projects will benefit rural areas in individual ways but will all contribute to the delivery enhanced community facilities that will contribute to social inclusion and wellbeing.

"The reason that the LEADER approach succeeds is not only due to the variety of projects which it supports, but also its



Portsoy Harbour

ability to deliver a broader strategy which will continue to revitalise communities and provide the legacy of a thriving rural society."

Vicky Thomson, LEADER Coordinator, said: "In order to achieve the LEADER vision of revitalised and sustainable communities it is crucial that rural villages such as Daviot and Longside retain successful, thriving community halls.

"Leisure, tourism and sporting facilities such as the projects at Haddo, Portsoy and Newburgh are also vital to the wellbeing of rural areas.

"It is important to recognise the huge amount of hard work which is put into the application process by communities across Aberdeenshire. LEADER would not succeed without the fantastic effort which is contributed by the volunteers who bring forward and manage applications."

Details of all approved projects to date and information on the LEADER programme are available on the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER website: www.aberdeenshireleader.org

Welcome to Network



Welcome to our Winter edition of Network. I hope many of you will get a well earned break over the festive season.

However, as we know business never sleeps for long and certainly as you will read in this issue a lot has been happening to support and help businesses in Aberdeenshire grow.

In this edition you can find out what types of support exist for business from reducing your waste to direct advice on how to compete during the economic downturn.

Please do take up these opportunities as we really value our local companies and want to see you go from strength to strength.

In October I had the pleasure of attending the Northern Star Business Awards and was delighted to see Aberdeenshire businesses being recognised. Well done to all those who won on the night.

I am pleased to report that the LEADER programme has seen another successful round of funding and that we have allocated all available funding to worthwhile projects across Aberdeenshire for the time being.

I can't quite believe that I am already coming to the end of my first year here, it has been an extremely enjoyable 12 month and I'm sure that next year will prove to be the same. With a number of exciting events, exhibitions and conferences to look forward to 2012, which we will detail in future editions, I am in no doubt it will go just as quickly.

I would like to thank all our readers and contributors to Network - Economic Development wishes you a very Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

Belinda Miller, Head of Economic Development for Aberdeenshire Council

Northern Stars of 2011

In October, business from across Aberdeenshire gathered at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre for the 2011 Northern Star Business Awards.

TV presenter Gaby Roslin hosted the evening, and said that the recognition of Aberdeen's role as one of five UK cities to watch in terms of leading economic recovery and Aberdeenshire's success in being named as the area with the highest quality of life in Scotland showed that the region had cause for celebration.

Bob Collier, Chief Executive of Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce said: "The 2011 Northern Star Awards showed once again why the North-east continues to punch well above its weight in terms of economic contribution to Scotland and the UK as a whole.

"The Awards bring together the brightest and best in the region recognising the hard

work of both individuals and companies who are leading the way within their own companies or sectors.

"This year saw a rise of over 20% in nominations for the Awards, but more importantly than the rise in volume was the high quality of entries. Our team of judges made up of the Chamber's Board, Council and representatives from all sectors of business had a difficult task in narrowing down the entries to the finalists, and the almost impossible task of selecting the overall winners."

14 awards were presented across a range of business disciplines and sectors, including Aberdeenshire businesses Zenith Oilfield Technology Ltd, LFH Engineering Ltd and AMC Engineering Ltd.

For a full list of the evenings winners visit www.northernstarawards.co.uk



Northern Star-Winners

© Donald Stewart Photography

ITB, Berlin 2012

VisitScotland have indicated that the greatest numbers of overseas visitors to Aberdeenshire are now arriving from Germany.

With the new direct Lufthansa air route between Aberdeen and Frankfurt now up and running, Aberdeenshire is keen to ensure we build on this by directly targeting the German tourism industry.

ITB, taking place in Berlin from March 7-11, 2012, is a leading travel trade show, and is open to both consumer and trade.

Aberdeen City and Shire will be joining VisitScotland on their shared stand (with VisitBritain), promoting the area to approximately 111,000 trade visitors and over 55,000 consumer visitors.

The show will be open to trade only from

Wednesday 7 to Friday 9 March and it will then be opened to trade and consumers on Saturday 10 and Sunday 11.

The event is being held at the Messe Berlin - Berlin's main exhibition centre - which has excellent road and rail links, and enjoys worldwide media recognition.

Exhibitor sales of about €6 billion and an exhibitor satisfaction rate of 92 per cent are evidence enough that supply and demand meet at the right place.

Details will shortly be available on how local tourism businesses can get involved in the Aberdeen City and Shire presence at the exhibition.

For more information contact Louise Mackie on 01224 664574, email: louise.mackie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Foodies turn out for Dining Club

More than 60 guests joined in a celebration of locally produced Scottish fare at the latest Grampian Food Forum Dining Club which was held at Gadie's Restaurant in Oyne, in September.

Guest speaker for the evening was Douglas Ritchie of Experiencing Scotland, an initiative which aims to bring tourism operators and food producers closer together to offer visitors locally sourced, quality Scottish food.

Gadie's has been selected as the only restaurant in the north east to participate in the initiative.

Mr Ritchie told diners: "Food is a very important element of the visitor experience and events like the Dining Club are a great way to spread the message about the business opportunities that tourism offers producers and ways in which the tourism and food sectors can collaborate."

Robin Baird of Gadie's Restaurant said: "We were thrilled to be chosen to host this prestigious event.

"We at Gadie's are proud to show off the wonderful native Scottish products and hope the night inspired people to eat more local food."

A number of local producers were on-hand to showcase products, including Sutherland's of Portsoy, A&G Collie Butchers, Ola Oils, Lynn Saunders, Mrs Smith's Cakes, Tap O'Noth Fudge and Simpson's of Buckie.

Elizabeth Mathie, co-ordinator of the Grampian Food Forum, said: "Gadie's Restaurant is passionate about using Scottish and local ingredients to ensure freshness and seasonality and has received a four-star rating from Visit Scotland for its Scottish fare so it was an excellent venue to host the Dining Club."



Douglas Ritchie, Alistair Longwell and Robin Baird

For more information email: grampianfoodforum@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Natural Energy Show back at Thainstone

In October, the Natural Energy Show returned for a third year to showcase renewable energy and energy efficiency options for homes and small businesses.

The event at Thainstone, Inverurie promised to be bigger and better than ever aiming to attract farmers and community groups as well as householders, and did not disappoint.

Aberdeenshire Council and the Energy Saving Trust organised and ran this year's event, taking over from Aberdeenshire Environmental Forum.

Installers of a range of renewable technologies were on hand to demonstrate their wares and there were talks in the Thainstone concourse covering the basics of each technology.

Renewable energy development co-ordinator at Aberdeenshire Council, Eric Wells, said: "I expected Solar PV to be high on the agenda so we had a number of local exhibitors who specialise in installing the technology.

"These included Solar Scotia based in Kintore, Monarch from Sauchen and Regentech, who recently joined forces with Richard Irvin, based at Altens in Aberdeen, to form Richard Irvin Sustainable Energy."

Other local companies exhibiting included Active Sustainable Energy, who cover a range of technologies but are probably best known for ground and air-source heat pumps, recently opening new offices in Aberdeen.

Ian Cowe from the Forestry Commission was on hand to discuss wood fuel options alongside a number of suppliers, including Puffin Pellets of Boyndie and Wood Recyclability.

Though these are only some of the exhibitors who took part in the exhibition it gives a flavour of the quality of installers and expertise we now have in the North East.

For more information contact Eric Wells on 01224 664734, email: eric.wells@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Belinda Miller and Louise Stratton look on as Kelly Wiltshire chats to Tony Scott of Banff and Buchan College at the Aberdeenshire Stand.

Corporate Website – Road Fault Reporting



Early this year, the council launched an online corporate website facility for road and street lighting related faults.

This initiative not only opens up another channel of communication for our customers but also helps deliver efficiency savings.

The website offers the following advanced features:

- Automatic progress emails and real-time progress checking
- Ability to upload photographs and images
- Avoidance of duplicate lighting defects, private road sections advice and unadopted road identification
- Links to partner websites for trunk roads and sewage related issues

- Real-time communication to Roads Inspectors mobile devices, which speeds up response times and reduces unnecessary business travel

Over the coming months our online offerings will continue to be extended and improved, for example missed waste collections and grit bin refills will be included.

If you notice any road or street lighting related defects in your area, why not log the request on

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

For any feedback or comments on the web based fault reporting system, please contact Dave Clark, principal systems development officer, at

david.clark@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Working with Jobcentre Plus

Some young jobseekers struggle to find and keep a job because they don't understand what it's like to work.

Work Experience - a Jobcentre Plus initiative - offers young unemployed people the chance to gain some valuable work experience.

You can give young jobseekers - who have little or no work experience - the opportunity to overcome these barriers by offering them a work experience placement in your business.

There is no restriction on the size or type of business - the quality of the placement is most important.

As a work experience host your business could reap real benefits, such as: supporting your local community by giving someone a greater chance of finding work, gaining a fresh perspective on your business from a young jobseeker, improving workforce diversity and developing the supervisory and management skills of your workforce.

If you feel that your business can offer suitable placements for young people, you can contact your Jobcentre Plus Employer & Partnership Manager Anne Kain on 01224 802590 or email

anne.kain@jobcentreplus.gsi.gov.uk

Aberdeenshire Local Transport Strategy

Earlier this year, Aberdeenshire Council undertook public consultations inviting views on what the future transport priorities should be in Aberdeenshire as part of the development of its Local Transport Strategy (LTS).

Over 1000 responses were received and based on the feedback and other processes, a draft Local Transport Strategy was developed for further consultation over the autumn months.

Taking on board the latest round of comments, the council is now in the process of finalising the strategy.

The LTS sets out a strategic future of transport in Aberdeenshire, outlining a set of transport objectives and actions designed to help the council achieve its vision.

The wide-ranging transport strategy sets out a number of actions covering everything from walking, cycling, and public transport to car parking, road safety and winter maintenance.

For further details about the LTS, please visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/lts



NORM Treatment Facility Opens near Peterhead

North Sea oil and gas operators can now begin to benefit from a new waste treatment facility which recently opened its doors for business at the Stoneyhill Resource Recovery Park near Peterhead.

Nuvia SITA NORM's new, multi-million pound treatment facility, will clean and recycle equipment from North Sea oil and gas operations affected by Naturally Occurring Radioactive Materials (NORM).

The facility is unique in the UK in that it has its own approved, on site disposal route. More importantly, it provides the region's oil and gas operators with the means to comply with SEPA's new guidelines on the disposal of NORM generated during fossil fuel recovery operations which come into effect in October.

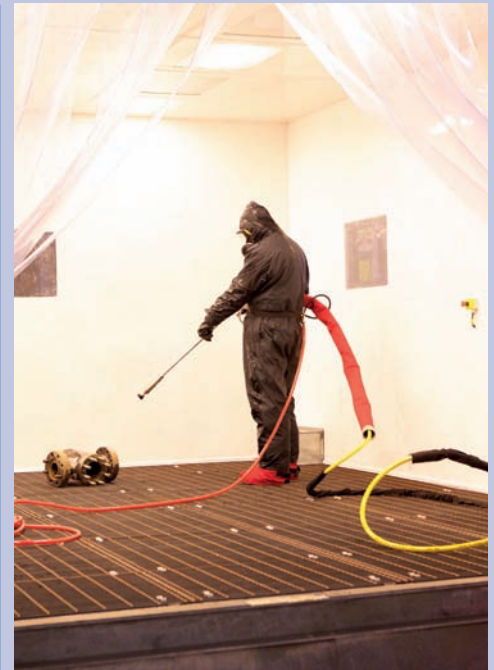
The new facility was opened in October, by Mr Brian Nixon, Chief Executive of Decom North Sea, the offshore oil and gas decommissioning forum.

Mr. Nixon commented, "Since the establishment of Decom North Sea eighteen months ago, I have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of, and interest in, the forthcoming programme of offshore decommissioning.

"Our role in the offshore decommissioning sector is to stimulate innovation, facilitate collaboration and promote capacity building within the supply chain. So it's extremely heartening to have all three of our ambitions demonstrated in the new Stoneyhill NORM Treatment Facility."

It is anticipated that upwards of 95% of all metal items that pass through the plant will be fit for either reuse or for entry into the wider recycling market.

For more information contact Steve Scrimshaw Communications & Marketing Manager steve.scrimshaw@nsnorm.com www.nsnorm.com



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REHIS Elementary Training Course in Occupational Health and Safety

Do you or your staff have responsibility for meeting legislative Health and Safety Requirements?

A REHIS (Royal Environmental Health Institute of Scotland) Elementary Health and Safety qualification will ensure that you can fulfill your legal obligations and without using external consultants.

The course is presented by the trained team from Aberdeenshire Council's Environmental Health Service, and is usually run in Gordon House, Inverurie.

However, with sufficient demand it can be run anywhere within Aberdeenshire.

The course entails six hours of tuition plus a 30 minute multiple choice assessment. On successful completion of the assessment each delegate will receive a REHIS certificate.

The course covers a vast array of topics including: Accidents, Emergencies & Ill Health; Slips, Trips & Falls; Health & Safety Law; Risk Assessment; Hazardous Substances; Workplace Health, Safety

& Welfare; Fire; First Aid; Machinery & Equipment; Electricity; Occupational Health and Manual Handling.

These topics are covered in a variety of presentation styles including power point, group work and practical exercises. The current cost for this course is only £55 per delegate, which includes all course notes, worksheets, examination paper and certificate.

To book your place on the next course or for more information contact Lorna Ross at lorna.ross@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Recycle more, save money!

Everyone knows that recycling is good for the environment, turning waste into a resource and easing the pressure on landfill. However, did you know that recycling can also save your business money?

Council premises across the area have been making changes, replacing waste bins with recycling bins.

For example, until last year Crombie School in Westhill had been using a 14 cubic yard skip, alongside an 1100 litre bin for paper recycling. The skip was emptied weekly during term time.

The school has recently replaced their skip with three 1100 litre waste bins, whilst keeping the paper recycling bin. They added a further recycling container each for cardboard (660L), cans and plastic bottles (240L each).

In the year before the changes, Crombie School had spent £3917.96 on emptying their skip and spent £303.24 on paper recycling collections, a total of £4221.20.

The cost for the new bin line-up at last year's prices would have been £2327.11, a

saving of at least £1894.09 for that year.

Why not get in touch with our Trade Waste service by calling Wasteline on 0845 600 3 900 to see how much you can save?

- Recycling collections cost 48% less than waste collections
- Landfill Tax currently stands at £56/tonne; there is no tax on waste sent for recycling

For more information visit: www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/waste

SAB case study Elite Tunnels Ltd

Elite Tunnels Ltd was established in 2008 and specialises in the manufacture and sale of polytunnels and substrate growing systems used in the soft-fruit, vegetable, flower and herb production markets.

The demand for polytunnels has grown substantially in recent years because of the requirement from retailers and, ultimately, consumers for produce over a longer 'season' and for more standardised and quality controlled output.

The company manufactures a variety of polytunnels, for example, Spanish and Enviro style tunnels and bespoke designs. They also supply growing systems alongside e.g. table top and these are sold across the UK and overseas e.g. Poland, America and Scandinavia.

Originally the manufacturing was outsourced, however, the company wanted better control over the design and quality of the product and established its own manufacturing premises at Edzell with the help of the Support for Aberdeenshire Business (SAB) Scheme.



There were significant costs involved in taking on rented premises and equipment together with the working capital to cope with skilled employees.

The SAB Scheme was able to help by providing Job Creation Grants for five staff worth £5,000 plus a Rental Grant of £5,200 to help offset the initial setting up costs. The business now employs seven people and the directors see the future focus being increasingly on export markets.

Robert Armstrong, Senior Business Development Executive said: "One of the

great things about the SAB Scheme is the sheer range of businesses it can assist and its flexibility.

"In this case I'm delighted that we have been able to assist a business not only unique in Aberdeenshire, but that is focusing so much effort into selling its products worldwide."

For more information about the SAB scheme, contact Robert Armstrong on 01569 768294 or email robert.armstrong@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Aberdeen City and Shire delighted with interest in local businesses at Offshore Europe 2011

Aberdeen City and Shire's leading role in the energy industry was brought to the fore at the Offshore Europe oil and gas conference and exhibition in Aberdeen earlier this year.

The event ran over three days at the Aberdeen Exhibition and Conference Centre and was hailed as the biggest show

in the conference's history, with more than 1,500 companies represented on 800 stands, and drawing more than 32,000 unique visitors.

Once again, Aberdeen City and Shire was represented on an eye-catching pavilion representing a range of local businesses and organisations.

The pavilion was developed by Aberdeen City Council and Aberdeenshire Council in partnership with sponsors Aberdeen City and Shire Economic Future (ACSEF), Eastern Airways, the Federation of Small Businesses, and the Aberdeen City and Shire Hotels Association.

Pavilion partner Eastern Airways announced an increase in its service from Aberdeen to Stavanger to three flights each weekday on the eve of this year's event.

The ACSEF business lounge on the top level of the pavilion played host to 16 events over the course of the conference, providing updates on a range of local initiatives.

The stand also hosted a series of well-attended international seminars focusing on helping local companies expand their business to business links in Northern Norway, Western Australia and Brazil – the top three target markets identified by local companies in the 2010 Aberdeen City and Shire Export Survey.



Aberdeen City and Shire pavillion

Survive and Thrive

Aberdeen City and Shire businesses have the opportunity to benefit from a free Business Gateway programme designed to help those adversely affected by the economic downturn. Survive and Thrive was launched in 2009 and since then has assisted 114 companies, helping to stabilise business and safeguard jobs.

Spread throughout the retail, service, construction, manufacturing, engineering and tourism sectors, the companies which, on average, have employed 10 people, have

needed assistance with a wide range of issues that include: counteracting falling sales, accessing finance from banks, and how best to deal with creditors.

Those looking for assistance are assigned a business adviser who examines the current position of the company and highlights the issues that need to be dealt with first. Together with the business owner, the adviser draws up a stabilisation plan and after it is put into practice, ideas on how to advance the company are implemented.

Andrew Burnett, Operations Director, Business Gateway Aberdeen City & Shire said: "The Survive & Thrive programme is proving to be just as relevant now as it was when it was first implemented. The economic situation is still tough and that is why it is important to provide a support network to local businesses that are facing challenges.

"From feedback we know that entrepreneurs are benefiting from having a fresh pair of eyes to look over all aspects of their business. After working with one of the programme's advisers they feel re-focused, re-invigorated and ready to overcome the hurdles that have arisen.

"The Survive & Thrive programme is free to local companies regardless of size and can offer up to 10 days of advisory support. We would encourage any enterprise in need of assistance to contact us."

To find out more call 01224 289725 or email: info@enetrust.com



Set your business on course for sailing success

Businesses are being challenged to look at ways of tapping into a predicted 45 percent growth in sailing tourism in Scotland over the next ten years, with the launch of Tourism Intelligence Scotland's new 'Sailing Tourism in Scotland' guide.

Stephen Leckie, Chair of the Tourism Leadership Group says: "Scotland offers some of the best sailing in the world, but as a keen sailor myself I know only too well that what separates a good sailing destination from a truly great one is the warmth of the welcome and the range of facilities and services available when sailors come onshore."

"As they may spend only a relatively short time on dry land, sailing visitors are looking

for a truly authentic experience, coupled with a great range of things to see and do and fabulous hospitality from businesses that have a real understanding of their needs and expectations. Businesses and destinations that can provide this outstanding level of service will be well-rewarded with more satisfied visitors, higher spend and a greater level of repeat visits."

The guide provides:

- Key intelligence on the sector
- Advice on how businesses can ensure that sailing visitors – ranging from the experienced to those trying it out for the first time – have the best experience possible

- A range of great marketing tips to help you increase your appeal to sailing visitors
- Plus inspiring ideas from other providers across Scotland who have grown their business through the sailing market

Businesses registered with TIS can access a copy of the guide online now at www.tourism-intelligence.co.uk



New Digital Participation Scheme for Aberdeenshire Families

Quality of life for people in rural Aberdeenshire in the future will be closely linked to their access and understanding of digital technology.

Those who lack access will spend more time and money on every day tasks, such as paying bills, shopping, or simply keeping up with events in their community.

They will be at a disadvantage in searching and competing for new jobs and they and their families will be without important tools they need to further their education and succeed.

The Digital Participation Scheme delivered in partnership by North East Scotland Credit Union (NESCU) and the Working for Families projects offers low income families and individuals the opportunity to increase their skills around ICT and financial capability.

The project aims to support households to purchase a computer to support with any learning, training or employment

opportunity.

Through NESCU the participants can access a low cost loan straight away for the computer scheme, outwith the usual eight weeks minimum savings times. All participants are offered a basic ICT workshop and are supported on to access additional training.

The project has already seen a number of clients access the laptop scheme as it provides them the opportunity to be flexible about learning and training at home.

The project hopes that the delivery of ICT, financial capability training matched in with Employability support will make a positive impact on a large number of vulnerable households across Aberdeenshire.

For more information contact Chris Smillie, Project Officer, Working for Families on 01467 629278.



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Although the content of The Network has been checked for accuracy, no legal responsibility will be accepted by the publishers for any errors or omissions.

Aberdeenshire Council Economic Development

About Economic Development

Economic Development within Aberdeenshire Council serves and supports local businesses and community initiatives throughout the area, as well as promoting Aberdeenshire and its diverse capabilities in new and existing markets. A team of experienced Business Development Executives and Industry specialists is strategically located in area offices to provide support and information on a wide range of topics including all aspects of business and trade development, financial assistance, European initiatives and marketing. The primary programme for assisting local companies is the flexible Support for Aberdeenshire Business (SAB) scheme. Aberdeenshire Council is also the lead authority in Business Gateway which supports start-up and growing businesses. In addition, Aberdeenshire Council promotes industrial and commercial development through the provision of sites and factories, with units currently available in a number of locations throughout the area. Economic Development services are listed and explained on Aberdeenshire Council's website, www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk

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