

THE NETWORK

Issue 65 Summer Edition September 2011

Infrastructure Services

keeping Aberdeenshire businesses in touch

Oil industry VIPs heading for Aberdeen

SPE Offshore Europe will be held at the Aberdeen Exhibition & Conference Centre from September 6-8, and is the largest upstream oil and gas event outside North America.

An Aberdeen City and Shire stand has been organised by Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City councils and is sponsored by ACSEF, Eastern Airways, the Federation of Small Businesses and Aberdeen City and Shire Hotels Association.

A number of local businesses will be exhibiting on the stand, including:

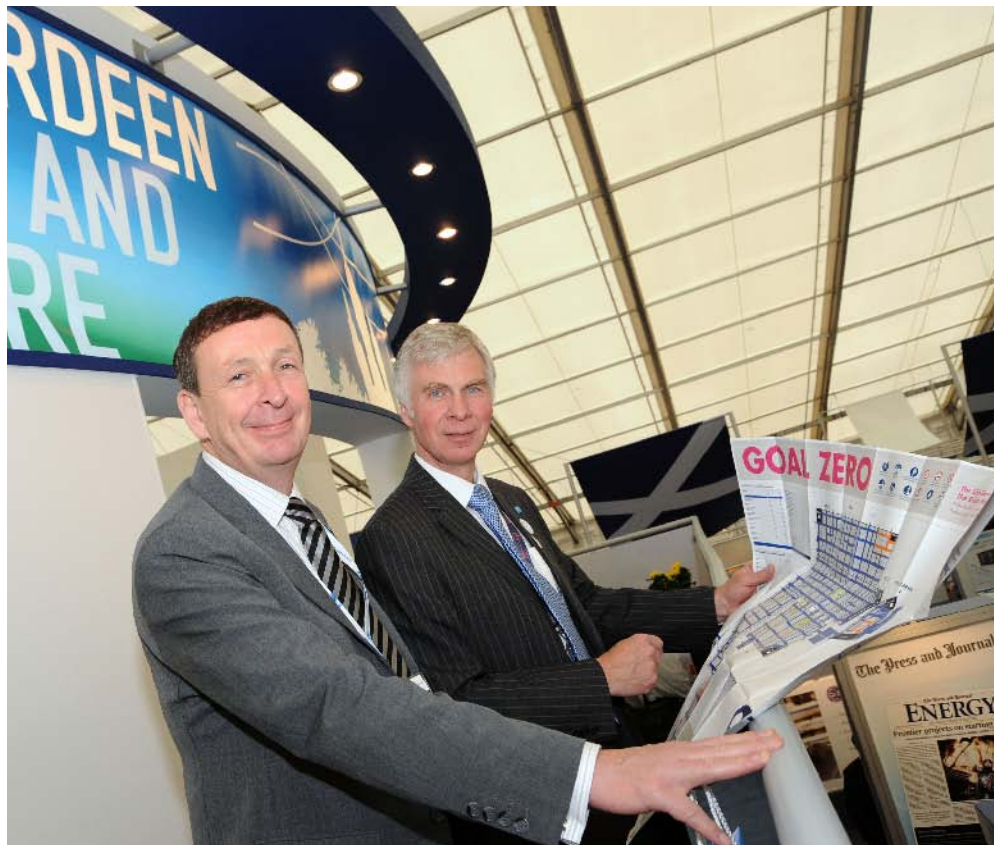
- Activating Better Choices Ltd
- Babcock
- Aerospace & Marine International Ltd
- Alchemy Oilfield Services Ltd
- Darcy Technologies Ltd
- Hiretech Ltd
- NCS Survey Ltd
- RiserTec Ltd

The show has been running in Aberdeen for nearly 40 years, growing alongside the North Sea industry in the seventies, eighties and nineties, and is still evolving, as is the industry.

The main theme for SPE Offshore Europe 2011's conference is 'Securing Safe, Smart, Sustainable Supply'. The Chairman of this September's event is Samir Brikho, who is Chief Executive of AMEC plc.

Mr Brikho described the biennial event as: "The industry's opportunity to learn, debate and challenge the ideas needed if the industry is to establish a safe, smart and sustainable supply for the future."

The offshore oil and gas industry is constantly evolving and reinventing itself. This is a process created through necessity, as one of the world's truly global industries tackles the challenge of finding and



producing hydrocarbons in new frontiers at a time when energy demand soars relentlessly upwards.

SPE Offshore Europe is a global affair with visitors from more than 100 countries expected to attend and companies from countries including Brazil, Canada, China, Nigeria and Australia exhibiting.

The last show in 2009 broke all-time attendance records, with nearly 50,000 people passing through its doors, and featuring the largest-ever exhibition area, with 1,421 companies participating. This reflects the international standing of the show – and the undoubted role that Aberdeen plays as Europe's energy capital.

Aberdeenshire Council's Chief Executive Colin Mackenzie and Roddy Matheson, Industry Sector Manager, at Offshore Europe 2009

For more information go to:
www.offshore-europe.co.uk

OE 2011[®]
Offshore Europe
Oil and Gas Conference
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6th-8th September 2011 | Aberdeen | UK

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL 

Serving Aberdeenshire from mountain to sea – the very best of Scotland

Welcome to Network



It has been another busy summer for economic development in Aberdeenshire including Taste of Grampian in May, the first Scottish Skipper event in June,

the Royal Highland and Turriff Shows and announcements on funding for communities and organisations through LEADER.

We are looking forward to a successful autumn which of course includes SPE Offshore Europe 2011. This biennial event really allows the whole area to showcase that we are the best place to live, work and study.

I'd like to take the opportunity to invite everyone attending SPE Offshore Europe to stop past the Aberdeen City and Shire stand to learn for themselves what some of our local businesses have to offer the industry.

Aberdeenshire Council provides a range of support for businesses and we encourage you to access these resources. There are a number of grant schemes to help your business grow from help with employing your first employee to helping a rural shop diversify and develop.

This issue of Network will let you know of the latest economic development news and events. This includes a look at the new marine simulator in Peterhead, a joint project to promote the east of Scotland as a location for the renewables industry and a look at how some of our local companies have expanded with a little bit of help and advice.

Aberdeenshire Council also welcomes Stephen Archer as the Director for Infrastructure Services. Stephen is returning to the north-east of Scotland and I know he is looking forward to meeting many of you over the coming year.

On behalf of everyone within the Economic Development team I would like to wish him the very best of luck for the future.

Belinda Miller, Head of Economic Development for Aberdeenshire Council

New Infrastructure Services director

Aberdeenshire Council welcomes Stephen Archer as the new director of Infrastructure Services.

Stephen joined us from Waveney and Suffolk Coastal District Council, where he was the Strategic Director for six years.

His previous post was in the integrated senior management team of two district councils, having started his career as an environmental health officer before spending time in planning, roads and transportation.

As a member of Aberdeenshire Council's Strategic Management Team he will provide entrepreneurial leadership vision and strategic direction to the council and its Infrastructure Service.

Functions of the service include: economic development, planning and building standards, property and facilities management, protective services and waste management, roads and landscape services, transportation and support services.

"One of the exciting things is there are services under this role which I have



Stephen Archer

not managed before, but that's part of the challenge, to pick up new things, new ideas and to meet new people," Stephen said.

"There's a lot to get to grips with over the coming months, but it's a challenge I relish.

"We have to deliver for councillors and the communities of Aberdeenshire because there are some significant issues that we need to deal with."

Business Gateway helps couple breathe new life into village bar

Novice publicans Tricia and Richard Rendall have been given help from Business Gateway Aberdeen City & Shire and have renovated the Forbes Arms Hotel and Brig Bar in Alford.

The couple, who decided to buy their 'local' which had lain empty for months as a challenge, will create up to six new jobs and offer a bar menu, seasonal dinner menu plus High Teas alongside nine en-suite bedrooms.

Tricia, who is a community nurse, said: "Because we've no experience running our own business we approached Business Gateway for help. We originally used the online resource then did a few workshops, which were superb, before speaking to an adviser.

"I hadn't a clue what to do or where to start but our adviser has been brilliant, giving lots of advice and encouragement.

"The information we've been given has really helped us feel more confident in our abilities to run a bar and hotel."

Business Gateway Business Adviser, Karen Stewart said: "Tricia and Richard's enthusiasm is inspiring and will help make their first business a success. They don't like to do things by half so will both be juggling running the bar with their day jobs for the first few months.

"We've armed them with all the business basics they need to get started and will continue to work with the couple, helping them build their business acumen to further their success over the years."

The business also received a £1,000 grant through the Business Gateway First Employee Grant Scheme.

To find out how Business Gateway can help your business visit www.bgateway.com or phone 0845 609 6611.

Alternatively call your local Business Gateway office directly on 01224 289 725.

Taste of Grampian

Thousands of people enjoyed some of Scotland's best local produce at the Taste of Grampian food and drink festival at Thainstone in June.

Celebrity chefs Simon Rimmer and Jean-Christophe Novelli entertained the crowds with cookery demonstrations throughout the day and rounded off the festival with a 'Ready Steady Cook' style cooking duel, which was won by Simon.

Over 130 food, drink and craft businesses took part in the 12th annual event reporting that they were very pleased with their sales and vowed to return next year.

Taste of Grampian is organised by Aberdeenshire Council, ANM Group Ltd, the Grampian Food Forum, the Press and Journal and Scottish Enterprise.



For more information visit www.tasteofgrampian.co.uk

Jean-Christophe Novelli cooking for the crowds at Taste of Grampian

Maximising Value for the Aberdeenshire Seafood Sector 2011-13

The seafood sector operates in a unique and challenging environment; day-to-day management issues often leave insufficient time for product and market development. Ongoing catching restrictions make it essential that the processing sector exploits opportunities to add value wherever possible.

Aberdeenshire Council and Seafood Scotland have joined forces in a project to offer financial support to fish processing businesses in Aberdeenshire to help them achieve accreditation standards and expand the range of potential market opportunities for their produce.

Under the project, up to 23 individual fish processing companies in Aberdeenshire will be supported up to a maximum of £1,500 per business to engage the services of an external adviser to raise operating standards to achieve accreditation under the British Retail Consortium (BRC), Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) or Safe and Local Supplier Accreditation (SALSA) over a 2 year term.

Such support will typically account for around 30% of the total costs of meeting the higher standards, with the balance of around 70% met by individual fish processing companies.



The project, which is focused primarily on processors in Buchan, and Banff and Buchan, is being promoted and delivered by Seafood Scotland.

For further information please contact Ian Land at ian@seafoodscotland.org

Grampian Food Forum Going for Growth

The Grampian Food Forum recently hosted its first open meeting of 2011, which was attended by around 30 delegates and was aimed at local food and drink producers who are keen to look at ways to grow their businesses.

Representatives from two local companies, Macphie of Glenberrie Ltd and Mackintosh of Glendaveny, were in the impressive line up of speakers who were there to share their experiences on 'Going for Growth'. Paula Cormack explained the journey

Macphie embarked upon to create and launch the company's first consumer-facing brand, Devilishh.

Gregor Mackintosh told how he has steadily grown his business over the last two years to achieve his current position supplying not only independent retailers and caterers but also ASDA stores across Scotland.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Mathie, Food Forum Coordinator, on 01224 664334.



Representatives at the Grampian Food Forum open meeting

Refreshing Boost for Visitors to Strichen Community Park

The heat is on for Aberdeenshire LEADER Projects

A number of exciting new LEADER projects have been awarded funding by the Aberdeenshire LEADER Local Action Group (LAG).

A total of six projects were successful in their application to Round 12 of the Rural Aberdeenshire LEADER Programme 2007-2013. The combined award to the six projects was £266,012 which takes total commitment of the programme to almost £3.9million since 2008.

Round 12 projects include a children's play area in Mintlaw, path improvements and health walks in Mid-Deeside, expansion of a popular visitor centre near Banff, a town centre enhancement scheme in Aboyne, renovation of the Hay Memorial Hall, a Victorian Hall in Cornhill and a feasibility study which will identify actions to revitalise the Sandhaven and Pitullie Community Hall on the Banff & Buchan coast.

Belinda Miller, Rural Aberdeenshire LAG Chairperson, said: "The latest LEADER applications demonstrate a diverse range of projects and good geographic coverage across Aberdeenshire.

"The LEADER programme has been very successful in supporting projects to date. In this context, it is evident the balance of funds available to new projects is reducing and it is anticipated there will be strong competition for the remaining funds."

Vicky Thomson, LEADER Co-ordinator, said: "Once again the LAG has supported a variety of great projects that will really make a difference in communities across Aberdeenshire.

"It is particularly encouraging to see the professional approach made by applicants in bringing forward and delivering quality projects for the benefit of local communities. LEADER provides the leverage for these projects to attract public and private sector funding from a wide range of sources."

www.aberdeenshireleader.org



The Lodge, Strichen Community Park

Strichen Community Park Company purchased a derelict site in 1996 with financial assistance through the Scottish Land Fund to develop a community amenity.

Strichen Community Park covers 30 acres comprising woodland walks, recreational areas, wildlife gardens and a loch, all managed and maintained by an enthusiastic group of volunteers.

The latest project is the total restoration and expansion of a Victorian estate lodge which has been transformed into Strichen community café.

The project is supported by Big Lottery, LEADER and Aberdeenshire Council.



Strichen Community Park

The café, which opened recently trading as 'The Lodge' under the management of Joanna McCallum, is proving to be a highly popular meeting area for locals and visitors to Strichen Community Park.

Adjacent to the Formartine and Buchan Way, the café is a welcome resting spot for walkers en route. There is an immediate benefit with the café having created part-time posts for a number of youngsters from the Strichen area. Quality local produce is a key element in the catering provision and local art and crafts will be on sale.

The community facility enhances the whole complex which sees many visitors throughout the year. Since opening, the café has generated increased footfall at the community park, and with increased visitors to the village, there is a knock-on benefit to local retail outlets.

The café improves facilities contributing to the sustainability of Strichen Community Park. The project is an excellent example of local stakeholders making key choices to develop facilities for community-wide benefit.

The café was officially opened by Rt Hon. Alex Salmond MSP in July.

SAB Case study: SMS Ltd

Stonehaven Microbiology Services Ltd (SMS) specialise in rapid microbiological analyses of microbiological pathogens, including Salmonella and Listeria, and also in the detection of E. coli, Enterococci, Pseudomonas and Legionella in water systems.

Through a grant of £6,026 from the Support for Aberdeenshire Business scheme, SMS Ltd achieved UKAS accreditation ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and offers an extensive list of laboratory tests.

SMS Ltd also has expertise in the detection and enumeration of microorganisms that are problematic in the oil industry, e.g. sulphate reducing bacteria (SRB's) and fungal contamination of oils.

With modern, state of the art laboratory facilities and equipment, and a dedicated and highly skilled workforce, SMS provides a service closely tailored to the needs of its customers.

Staff also have extensive experience in research into rapid methods for detection of microbial pathogens and hygienic food processing, and are able to set up bespoke projects to investigate specific customer needs, e.g. preparation, execution and delivery of a project investigating a novel biocide treatment for use in the cleaning and disinfection of foods.

A full listing of the services provided by SMS can also be found on their website, www.sms-ltd.co.uk. If a test is required that is not listed, contact SMS as they



Sample analysis underway in SMS's laboratory

can put together specialist analytical test packages when required.

For more information contact Dr Ian Millar on 01651 873222 or email igm@sms-ltd.co.uk or enquiries@sms-ltd.co.uk

Support for Peterhead engineering start-up from Aberdeenshire Council business scheme

McKenzie Engineering Ltd is a start-up engineering firm that has set a torch to the recession in expanding during a period of decline for many with support from a grant from Aberdeenshire Council.

Alex McKenzie was Managing Director of Taylor Manufacturing Ltd in Fraserburgh which closed in April, and he used redundancy as an opportunity to set up his own enterprise.

The entrepreneur, who has 27 years' experience in the engineering sector, approached Aberdeenshire Council to take advantage of advice and support via the authority's Support for Aberdeenshire Business scheme.

Alex said he saw the chance to create a new company on the strength of his relationships with clients from his previous role and was thankful to the support from the council.

McKenzie Engineering Ltd is now employing four engineers and leasing space at Balmoor industrial estate in Peterhead with plans to take on more staff in future.

The company provides welding, fabrication and engineering services mainly to the oil and gas and food processing industries.



Senior business development executive Christine Webster said: "Alex received a plant and equipment loan to enable the new company to purchase the necessary tooling and equipment as well as a job creation grant and rental assistance.

"The loan is particularly important to the company as bank facilities were limited when he was starting up and this is a problem many new businesses are facing at the moment so he is really bucking the trend."

If you are looking for advice or support for your business in Banff and Buchan contact Senior Business Development Executive Christine Webster on 01346 519881 or by email at christine.webster@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

To find out more about the Support for Aberdeenshire Businesses (SAB) scheme visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/support

Aquarius Farmers as Water Managers

The Aquarius Project is an EU funded project through the North Sea Region Interreg ivb Programme. The project is based on finding better ways to deal with water management issues such as flooding, water quality, drought or a combination of these in conjunction with the landowners.

As part of this project Aberdeenshire Council hopes to construct a demonstration site for flood alleviation which may offer other benefits to the farmers and local environment such as improved water quality, associated habitat and water storage for use during drier periods.

The main thrust of this work is to establish how land managers see themselves being affected by such works and how they can be actively encouraged to contribute to the overall water management goals as part of their business.

The project involves detailed discussions with our European Partners on issues such as forms of payment to land managers, dealing with regulations and examples of good practice.

Thanks to the Aquarius Project, awareness of water related environmental problems in the North Sea Region is improving.

For more information about the Scottish pilot visit the website at: www.macaulay.ac.uk/aquarius/index.html

New marine simulator for Banff and Buchan College in Peterhead

Banff and Buchan College has installed a state-of-the-art mission bridge simulator at its Peterhead Learning Centre.

This was a joint project, costing £250,000, between the college and European Fisheries Fund (EFF), supported by Seafish Industry Authority (SFIA), Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF), Whitefish Producers and Peterhead Port Authority.

The simulator software also incorporates two further ships and ten accurately represented sea areas, including the coastline around Peterhead bay. Additional charts and maps can be added.

The simulator will be used to support training by the college for fishermen, merchant navy, liquid cargo, GMDSS and command and control. Software has been installed to include offshore windfarms to support the college align their training portfolio to include boat transfer courses for offshore renewables.

Staff are currently working in partnership with Falck Nutec to develop a suite of bespoke programmes for offshore renewables. This has been possible by using the unique skills, expertise and resources of both training providers.

The simulator will be at the forefront of the college's vision to create a maritime centre of excellence in Peterhead at the northern gateway to the Energetica corridor. They are about to embark on a £250,000 investment in the refurbishment of Peterhead Learning Centre, to transform it into a purpose built marine facility incorporating practical simulation and theoretical training areas.

Once complete, the centre will allow the college to work with a full spectrum of clients, from Skills for Work school pupils through to those undertaking Master Mariner Unlimited.

For more information contact Linda Hope on 01346 506015 or email lhope@banff-buchan.ac.uk



*The simulator in action
Photo courtesy of Banff and Buchan College*

Strong occupancy levels continue in Aberdeenshire

Aberdeenshire Council is the largest single provider of business units in the north east of Scotland. With over 400 properties, the council's offering appeals to a broad spectrum of occupiers with spaces that vary from starter units to large industrial factories.

Despite gloomy economic forecasts elsewhere, the council is witnessing positive market trends for their properties. Occupancy rates levels are high, with totals in excess of 96%, and requirements for space are still evident.

Turnover of properties is also low, despite the difficult trading conditions being experienced by many companies. The vibrant oil and gas industry and high oil price are contributing factors in sustaining the local market.

With the high demand for business space, the council is continuing to develop properties and sites to ensure new business space and land is brought to the market.

Development of business parks is something the council has successfully been pursuing and sites are currently available at Macduff, Fraserburgh, Peterhead, Mintlaw, Inch and Gourdon.

Ongoing collaboration with the private sector will see further developments brought to the market and demonstrate the council's determination to facilitate inward investment to the area, in addition to natural growth.

With land values and rental rates within Aberdeenshire at lower levels to those within Aberdeen, areas that were once thought of as rural are now becoming increasingly popular business destinations, and the council is committed to promoting these areas and local business.

One such location is the 70,000sq ft storage and industrial premises at Balmoor Industrial Estate, Peterhead which is available on flexible terms and is ideal for sub-division.

For further details on any of the above opportunities or commercial property space please contact: John Gahagan 01224 664778 or visit www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/property

Doorstep selling regulations

Trading Standards are highlighting current legal obligations for businesses who visit consumers at their home. Compliance with these obligations is essential and failure to do so could leave a business out of pocket as any contract would be unenforceable.

When a contract is entered into in the consumer's home for most goods and services to the value of over £35 the consumer will have an automatic seven day cooling off period.

Failure to provide details of the cooling off period to the consumer in writing and in the prescribed format is a criminal offence and if the correct paperwork is not provided then the consumer does not have to pay for the work.

If a consumer wants the work to start during the cooling off period, consent for this must be obtained from the consumer in writing.

The requirements not only apply to doorstep sellers or cold callers but any business that may visit a consumer in their home such as gas fitters, electricians, landscapers, builders, decorators and kitchen fitters etc.

For more information, contact Aberdeenshire Council's Trading Standards on 01467 628323 (Inverurie) or 01346 510505 (Fraserburgh).

CCS Plans for Peterhead



Peterhead Power Station

Scottish and Southern Energy (SSE) has applied for EU funding to develop carbon capture and storage (CCS) at its gas-fired power station at Peterhead.

The project would design and develop a post-combustion CCS facility capable of capturing CO₂ from one of the 385MW combined cycle gas turbine units at Peterhead. The captured CO₂ would then be transported to St Fergus, via an underground pipeline, for further compression before being transported via an undersea pipeline to a storage site in Shell UK's depleted Goldeneye field.

Shell UK will itself take part in the project, on the offshore transport and storage aspects, along with CO₂ Deepstore, a subsidiary of Petrofac. SSE is seeking funds from the EU's €13.5 billion NER300 initiative, which was launched last November and aims to provide support for at least eight CCS projects.

SSE's project will also be eligible for government funding via the Department of Energy and Climate Change's £9 billion CCS programme, which was opened up to gas-fired power plants last year.

Ian Marchant, SSE chief executive, said:

"I believe Peterhead represents the best site in the UK for a gas CCS project and our co-operation with Shell and Petrofac strengthens this proposition even further.

"Given the work already undertaken, the project can proceed at a pace at least equal to other CCS projects in Europe."

For more information contact:

Chris Bell on 0141 224 7083 or email chris.h.bell@sse.com

www.sse.com

East of Scotland rural Businesses to benefit from low carbon and renewables EU project

Local authorities across the east of Scotland are joining forces to support businesses to overcome the barriers they face to participate in the low carbon economy and take advantage of opportunities in renewable energy.

The collaborative project will focus on a number of opportunities including offshore renewables, self generation and small scale renewable energy, but also in other specific sectors important for rural economies such as environmental and clean technologies, tourism, food and drink, land-based industries (forestry, agriculture), construction and technical/advisory services, transport and renewable heat.

The two year project, launched in June, is part financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and is led by Perth and Kinross Council in partnership with Aberdeenshire Council, Angus Council, Fife Council and East Lothian Council as a sub-group of the East Coast Renewables Alliance.

The project will allow rural businesses to meet and exchange, promote and develop their products and services exploiting the expanding global renewable and low carbon economy markets.

For more information contact Alistair Reid on 07917 067041 or email alistair.c.reid@aberdeenshire.gov.uk



Biomass pellet and wood boiler

Are you Waste Aware?



Many businesses are unaware of their responsibilities regarding the waste their organisation produces. Every business that produces waste must ensure that they comply with legislation covering waste management.

Did you know that anyone who collects and transports your waste must be either a registered carrier of controlled waste or exempt from registration?

For more details on waste management legislation go to www.netregs.gov.uk

A recent consultation document issued by the Scottish Government sets out a range of proposals for improving the way waste is managed in Scotland.

These include the potential for compulsory recycling for business waste, for more information go to:

www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2011/02/09135833/0

Aberdeenshire Council can provide a comprehensive trade waste collection service which includes a range of collections for recyclable materials. The trade waste team are also on hand to provide advice and guidance relating to any waste management issues businesses may have.

For more information on the services the council can provide go to www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/waste/trade or phone Wasteline on 0845 600 3 900.

Grant aid to improve private water supplies

Aberdeenshire has the largest number of private water supplies of any of Scotland's local authorities. Over the past five years many local businesses have improved their private water supplies by means of a grant from the council.

Grants of £800 per premises are still available for commercial or public activities or for supplies that provide water to fifty or more people.

Officers will take samples, undertake an assessment of your existing system and provide a written report on what works are required or recommended to bring your supply up to an acceptable standard.

If there is more than one property (including domestic premises) on the supply then they can also be offered a grant to make the necessary improvements. To encourage take up of these grants the first sample and assessment are free but subsequent samples will be charged for.

Assessments can be arranged by contacting the Environmental Health office at Gordon House, Inverurie, on 01467 628332.

Similar grants are also available for individual householders but conditions and amounts are slightly different.

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

Main office:

Woodhill House, Westburn Road
Aberdeen AB16 5GB
Tel: (01224) 664727
Fax: (01224) 664713
email: economic.development@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Area offices:

29 Bridge Street, Ellon
Aberdeenshire AB41 9AA
Tel: (01358) 726411
Fax: (01358) 726410

Gordon House, Blackhall Road,
Inverurie AB51 3WB
Tel: (01467) 628100
Fax: (01467) 624285

10 Commerce Street
Fraserburgh AB43 9AQ
Tel: (01346) 519881
Fax: (01346) 510484

Viewmount
Arduvie Road
Stonehaven AB39 2DQ
Tel: (01569) 768294
Fax: (01569) 766549

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