

PORTILLO JOURNEYS NORTH

Michael Portillo was filming in Peterhead in late April for the latest series of his Great British Railway Journeys. He spent a morning at the Greenhill Fish Market, guided by Peter Duncan, for part of one episode. The series is expected to be broadcast later this year.

PETERHEAD



PORT AUTHORITY

NEWSLETTER

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Trading year better than expected

Peterhead Port Authority managed to maintain a highly respectable turnover of £12.5 million last year despite the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on operations.

The 2020 figure was down by just 6.5% on 2019's earnings of £13.3 million, although higher costs due to the outbreak understandably forced profits down to £1.7 million from £2.8 million the previous year.

The overall value of fish handled through the port slipped from the record high of £210 million in 2019 to £190 million, with much reduced volumes and prices for whitefish.

And the annual gross tonnage of commercial shipping using the Port was down to 8 million tonnes from 9.4 million tonnes in 2019.

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PPA chief executive Simon Brebner said: “The year 2020 was incredibly challenging, with Covid-19, a low oil price and uncertainty surrounding Brexit.

“However, through careful planning and fantastic support from our employees and the wider port community of clients, users and suppliers, we have been able to report a much stronger trading year than we had anticipated through our re-forecasting.

“Looking ahead, the final Brexit agreement and the disruption to seafood exports it has caused, along with Covid-19 restrictions, mean the whitefish and shellfish sectors will remain under pressure for the foreseeable future.



“Within the energy sector, the oil price is starting to recover and operators are beginning to tackle the backlog of maintenance and investment offshore.”

The Board decided to impose a standstill on all port, vessel and cargo related charges for 2021 to assist customers and stakeholders in a much needed path to recovery.

Mr Brebner said it was important to demonstrate to customers that the Port’s value proposition remained strong while recognising the challenges caused by Covid, Brexit and fish quota cuts.

Revetment work at Alexandra Parade

Work is now beginning on refurbishing and reinstating approximately 160m of the rock revetment along Alexandra Parade, which has been damaged and eroded since it was constructed in the 1980s. The contractor is MacLaughlin & Harvey, with RPS Group the project consultants.



X-blocks of the type being deployed along Alexandra Parade.

This £5.5 million project, involving the installation of rock armour up to 25,000 tonnes in weight, including around 300 large X-block units, will provide improved protection from overtopping seas both to vehicles on the roadway below and the nearby fish market and other properties.

The work had to be postponed last year and a series of rock-filled containers was erected along the front of the fish market to provide temporary protection.

“This is part of our continuous quest to improve the infrastructure of the harbour, and is a major initiative on the part of the Board of PPA,” said chief executive Simon Brebner.

Drive towards net zero

Peterhead Port Authority is driving ahead with its long-term plan for net zero emissions, having secured EMFF funding for an all-electric utility van for harbour security and transfer of staff around the harbour and an electric road sweeper for quays and roads.

Funding was also gained for 30 sets of waste handling receptacles to be located around the fishing harbour, with green bins for recyclable waste and red ones for landfill material.

The Authority is fully committed to reducing energy use and deploying renewable energy, which it already does via solar panels on the roof of the new fish market and for all fishing vessels plugging in at the port.



PPA's new all-electric utility van.

Health and safety transition

At the start of February this year, Peterhead Port Authority underwent a remote five-day external health and safety audit.



The audit resulted in the successful achievement and transition from the OHSAS 18001 to the ISO 45001 Health & Safety accreditation.

The new international accreditation places a greater focus on the health and safety responsibilities of management with regard to their relevant departmental operations and workforce requirements.

The audit also recognised and welcomed the pandemic measures introduced at the port, such as homeworking, temperature scanning, sanitising stations and alternating employee work-breaks.

This accreditation has provided a transparency and assurance that PPA is committed to maintaining a safe and healthy working environment throughout the port estate.



RFPS revalidation

Peterhead Port Authority has recently been revalidated as a member of the Responsible Fishing Ports Scheme.

Peterhead was the first port to achieve this status back in April 2019 and following the latest audit, which was completed with no non-conformances, was commended for:

- i) Maintaining the required standards during the Covid-19 pandemic; and**
- ii) Putting considerable effort into continuous improvement in a wide range of areas since the original accreditation was granted.**

Allison Sherrington, Operation & Compliance Manager at Peterhead Fish Market, said: “This is a fantastic result and demonstrates Peterhead Port Authority’s dedication to improving all facilities for future generations.”

Meanwhile, office space has been created for a dedicated team of Aberdeenshire Council Environmental Health Officers (EHOs) to be located at the Greenhill Fish Market. This is to allow the certification of fishery product exports to the EU post-Brexit.

The fish market will also give the certifying officer the facilities needed in order to inspect any shipments that require inspection in a Brand Reputation Compliance Global Standards (BRCGS) approved facility.

In addition to certifying shipments from processors to the EU, the certification hub facilitates direct export from the auction floor to customers in the EU.

