

Alliance representatives launch  
bid at Aberdeen Harbour.

**PETERHEAD**



**PORT AUTHORITY**

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# Green Freeport status will create 32,000 jobs

Up to 32,000 high-quality jobs will be created in the North East of Scotland under plans to transform the region into the “Net Zero capital of Europe”.

A major regional alliance, which includes Peterhead Port Authority, the Port of Aberdeen and Aberdeen International Airport, has submitted a formal bid for Green Freeport status.

If the Scottish and UK governments approve the North East Scotland Green Freeport, it will boost gross value added (GVA) by £8.5 billion over the next 10 years and usher in a new era of investment, innovation, regional regeneration and opportunities.

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The bid, whose partners also include Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire councils, has received widespread support from business and industry leaders as well as politicians across the area.

The partners believe the fusion of Green Freeport status with the North East's world-leading energy expertise will lead the UK's decarbonisation drive and just transition to a net zero economy.

It will also create a regional customs hub for premium

and globally-recognised Scottish food and drink exports, building direct links to key markets for products such as seafood, Scotch whisky and meat produce.

Peterhead Port Authority chief executive Simon Brebner (pictured above with Bob Sanguinetti, chief executive of Port of Aberdeen, and Jon Matthews of Aberdeen International Airport), said: "A successful bid will have a transformative effect on the Peterhead area, accelerating the push towards net zero through carbon capture and storage and creating thousands of jobs, as well as dovetailing with vital decarbonisation work across the region.

"For Scotland and the UK to achieve its climate goals, it needs the energy sector in the North East to be in the vanguard of the transition."

North East Scotland Green Freeport will comprise a special economic zone within which a number of levers and tax incentives will be available to attract new investment and support expansion of existing businesses to invest, innovate and develop the skills needed to deliver a wide range of pioneering new projects.

Specifically, Peterhead Port will be central to the Acorn Project, the carbon capture and storage scheme (CCUS) based at nearby St Fergus, with imports of carbon dioxide from around the UK coming in via the former tanker jetty (pictured left).

It will also be closely involved in supporting innovation and automation to transform the crucial seafood sector.

## Carbon capture import role on horizon for old tanker jetty

Peterhead Port Authority and Storegga, the company behind the Acorn Project, commissioned a survey (pictured above) of the former tanker jetty at the south side of the port, with a view to investing in its upgrade to handle bulk carbon dioxide imports from industrialised regions across the UK and Europe.

These imports would be at the heart of the port's net zero transition, which the North East Scotland Green Freeport partners hope will be accelerated via a successful bid.

The carbon will ultimately be pumped to and stored in depleted North Sea gas fields.

Acorn, part of the Scottish Cluster, secured reserve project status in 2021 when the UK Government selected CCUS projects for a share in £1 billion of funding.

Linked to this is a scheme to capture carbon at Peterhead Power Station.

PPA chief executive Simon Brebner is adamant that without these major initiatives not only Scotland but the UK as a whole cannot achieve its net zero goals.

"It is critical that this region is substantially supported through Green Freeport status to drive forward the transition to net zero," he said.

"As well as helping the country achieve its climate targets, these projects will provide substantial new employment in what is a relatively deprived area."

As well as carbon capture, Green Freeport status could help to transform the fish processing sector, especially through the introduction of new technology, to match the heavy investment in whitefish and pelagic fleets.

And offshore wind could be supported with the deployment of empty land banks near Boddam which would suit manufacturers for the assembly of turbine blades prior to their dispatch to the North Sea at the port itself.

"We don't own the land but we work closely with partners who do," said Mr Brebner. "That potentially could help streamline a lot of the process involved in importing and exporting.

"Tax sites would be a major benefit to the users of that, potentially also at St Fergus as well. I think we've got a very valuable proposition across the different collaborative organisations."







## Retirement celebrations

Peterhead Port Authority held a recent staff event to mark the retirement of two long-standing employees.

David Buchan has retired as Senior Port Engineer having worked for over 42 years with the port while Gillian Gunn has retired as Office Manager after 25 years.

PPA Chief Executive Simon Brebner said: "It's the end of an era for both of these dedicated and committed employees. However, a new chapter of their lives has opened up and I wish them a long and very happy retirement pursuing whatever passions they have set their hearts on."

Stephen Paterson, Chief Financial Officer, added: "Both leave a lasting legacy and we would like to recognise their significant contribution to the success of the organisation over recent decades.

"We wish them every happiness in their retirement

and have no doubt that whatever new pursuits they devote their time and energy to, each will make the same success of these as they have in their careers at Peterhead Port Authority."

Mr Buchan said it had been a "privilege" to have been given the job, which he left his previous post as a teacher of physics, maths and chemistry in Fraserburgh for.

"It was a once in a lifetime opportunity, and if I was offered the chance to do it all again, I would."

Mrs Gunn said: "25-and-a-half years is a long time. I enjoyed working at both the Bay and Port authorities, but the time has come to move home to Inverness to be closer to our family."

## Changing faces across the Board

The Board of Peterhead Port Authority has a new member following the departure of a long-standing trustee. Elaine Leith-Hedley was appointed after Robbie Buchan, who had served for nine years, stood down.

Meanwhile James Stephen, who joined the Board in 2020, has been appointed to fill the deputy convenor role vacated by Mr Buchan.

Dr Leith-Hedley is from the North-East of Scotland (born in Keith, now living in Buckie) and has recently completed a 35-year international career with Shell, in technical and commercial roles in countries including the UK, The Netherlands, Canada, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

She has a BSc degree from the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and PhD from the University of Sheffield.

She is an engineer by background and worked onshore and offshore in her early roles, and more recently in asset management, strategy development and in board director roles. Elaine is married to Tony and they enjoy spending time with their family, and golfing.

Mr Buchan said the highlight of his time on the Board was the completion and opening of the new Peterhead Fish Market and associated new quays and deepened harbour.

"It was a challenging role, but I was glad to be able to contribute in some way to getting the harbour back to where it was, and where it should be," he said.

"I wish the Board every success for the future – they have done a remarkable job in difficult circumstances in the past few years."



## Port stalwart toasts 70th

Board member John Wallace, a former Peterhead Port Authority chief executive, was presented with a special cake to mark his 70th birthday at a recent trust meeting.

He joined Peterhead Bay Authority as chief executive on 1st April 2001, steering the organisation into the merger with Peterhead Harbour Trustees on 1st January 2006 to form Peterhead Port Authority, and was appointed its first chief executive.

He retired on 15th July 2016 and was appointed to the Board on 1st January 2017.

However, he then returned to stand in as temporary chief executive after the departure of his successor between November 2017 and August 2018, after which he reverted to serving as a Board member.

Chair Gavin Thain presented John with the cake on behalf of the Board.