



LERWICK PORT AUTHORITY

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OFFICIAL INAUGURATION OF LERWICK HARBOUR **DREDGING & LAND RECLAMATION PROJECT**

CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME ADDRESS

Minister, ladies and gentlemen – welcome to Lerwick Harbour...

Like all ports in the UK, Lerwick operates on a commercial basis without troubling the public purse, although we are grateful for any European or infrastructure funding that is available for projects.

When it comes to our contribution to the economy, we are pleased that 77% of the port's income comes for outside Shetland and 80% of our expenditure is made locally – and long may that continue.

The major dredging and land reclamation project which we are here to mark was the largest capital investment in the port's modern history and a significant achievement in its own right.

Keeping pace with the times, we've deepened channels... widened one of the entrances...and deepened berths. A minimum 9 metres of water is now available through the port.

Our thanks, therefore, to Arch Henderson our civil engineering consultants who designed and supervised the project, and to Westminster Dredging Company, the main contractor. Our special thanks to the project team at Lerwick who delivered the contract on time and on budget and I would also like to mention the able assistance provided by all the local sub-contractors involved.

However, what is really significant is the potential the project has created for Shetland and for a range of industries – for example, fishing, oil & gas, including decommissioning, and the cruise sector.

The dredging project has ushered in a new era of opportunities for Lerwick Harbour, with the capacity to handle larger vessels and additional land for new and expanding activities by a variety of companies.

It marks another important milestone in creating the infrastructure for the future of what we like to describe as “Britain’s Top Port”!

And there is more – much more - to come....

For example, construction of two additional quays, with nine metres’ water depth, at Greenhead Base will begin next year, increasing the berthing there by a third.

Concepts have been developed to show how Lerwick can provide deep-water infrastructure with at least 20 metres’ depth, with two suitable locations - at Dales Voe and next to the reclaimed land at North Greenhead.

Projects on the scale of the dredging and land reclamation and the follow-up schemes don’t happen overnight. They take long and careful planning by the Authority and our consultants. They also take commitment and confidence on the part of the Authority, recognising the importance of the port’s role in the Shetland economy and to the industries we serve.

We look forward to working closely with all interested parties in maximising the potential of the new opportunities to mutual benefit.

And you don’t have to take my word about the potential – Mike Porter and John Goodlad both known to many of you and who will now gives us an insight into the significance of our project for the oil and fishing industries, respectively.

/Ends

13 October 2009