



ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING 2017

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Port of Blyth held its Annual Public Meeting at its Port Training Centre on Monday 9th April 2018 at 5pm, with 75 guests in attendance.

Purpose

As an independent statutory Trust Port, the Port of Blyth's Annual Public Meeting is a key feature of the Port's year as it forms an important part of the engagement process with all stakeholder groups.

The meeting enables the Port to officially report to all interested parties on the performance of the Port in the previous year and share its plans for the future. It also provides an important opportunity for stakeholders to ask questions of senior management and feedback on any issues or concerns.

Presentations

Guests were welcomed to the by Chairman of Commissioners Geoff Hodgson, who outlined the recent key achievements of the Port and his projections for a positive future.

Port of Blyth Chief Executive Martin Lawlor made a presentation on the Port's operational and financial performance during 2017, reporting a group turnover of £20.6m and an adjusted operating profit of £1.32m. He also reviewed the performance of individual departments at the Port, provided information on key projects carried out throughout the year on behalf of clients and outlined future plans for investment within the Port estate. As a conclusion to the presentation, the Port's latest promotional film was played, which can be viewed [here](#).

Question & Answer Session

A number of stakeholders put questions to Martin Lawlor, Chief Executive of Port of Blyth, all of which are summarised here:

What affect may Brexit have on the future of the Port?

Whilst Brexit has clearly created uncertainty in the port industry, it is possible that an increase in a requirement for UK content in the offshore energy sector might provide opportunities for the Port of Blyth. The container service could be affected but is a niche service supported heavily by subsidiary Transped and will be better placed than most to meet any challenges that Brexit creates.

What progress is being made with the water sports facility within the BEACH development on the river?

Despite some delays as a result of uncertainty at Active Northumberland, the lease holder for the facility, it is hoped that progress on this element of the BEACH development will progress soon.

What further details can be given with regards to the development of the former Blyth power station site?

Inevitably developments of this scale can take time to progress. However the Port expects work to develop the new quay at the Ash Barge dock will begin later this year along with ground remediation works across the site. Interest remains strong from potential inward investors and site owners Arch are working closely with the Port to progress the developments and bring extra jobs to the estuary.

How does the Port manage to expand successfully alongside the environmental protections that are in place around the estuary?

The Port has always sought to balance the needs of environmental protection with the working requirements of a busy port. By actively engaging with all relevant partners responsible for marine planning and environmental protection it is possible to progress on-going sustainable and environmentally friendly development.

Does the Port have plans to engage with the North of Tyne Devolution leaders on road improvements in and out of Blyth to support future performance and growth?

The Port shares the concerns of those in Blyth who see road transport routes in and out of Blyth as an increasing problem. Clearly we rely on those routes for the continued transport of goods and materials passing through the Port and are engaging with those involved in this devolution to ensure that their attention is drawn to the investment required to support both Blyth and the Port.

Given the progress made with the STEM education partnership in the last year, how does the Port plan to support this in the future?

Having played a vital role in the formation of the Blyth STEM Hub in 2017 we intend to continue to support and maintain the work going on to ensure that children and young people are fully aware of the potential for personal progress through STEM subjects and STEM related jobs both within the Port and around the estuary. There is also a wider aspiration for a training and education hub around the estuary linking in training providers such as Port Training Services, employers, NCC, higher education establishments and schools.

Does the Port expect the recent change of administration at Northumberland County Council to have any impact on the development of the former Blyth power station site with Arch?

Whilst there are clearly changes ahead for Arch, the Port doesn't foresee any particular issues with the power station site development itself as a result of the new administration. Despite some delays which are to be expected sometimes on a development of this scale, the project is progressing well with a number of important

milestones expected to be achieved in 2018. The Port will be doing all it can to support this progress and attract further potential interest in the site from the offshore energy industry.

Informal networking & feedback

To close the meeting there was an informal networking session where senior management were on hand to meet stakeholders and further discuss the Port's operations.

Following the meeting attendees were asked to rate the event via a feedback form which presented some very positive results. More than 78% of guests considered the event to be excellent whilst 89% of guests rated the quality of the presentations made as excellent.

Annual Review

The Port's Annual Review for 2017 has now been published and contains full details of its financial performance during the year as well as introductions to the Board of Commissioners and senior management and information on each department's achievements. A PDF version of this document is available to download from the Port's website [here](#).