

Home fleet is facing 'sea of opportunity' says federation

Fishing: Brexit negotiators warned over using access as bargaining chip

BY KEITH FINDLAY

Scottish fishing chiefs have warned Brexit negotiators not to concede access to UK fishing grounds as part of any deal.

Industry leaders say the home fleet is facing an "unparalleled opportunity".

But there are also fears this opportunity could be wasted if access to valuable fishing grounds is used as a bargaining chip.

Yesterday, the Scottish Fishermen's Federation (SFF) urged politicians in Edinburgh to work hand-in-hand with Westminster on making sure that whatever Brexit deal is finally struck it is not at the expense of domestic fishing opportunities.

SFF chief executive Bertie Armstrong said: "By insisting on fairer shares of catching opportunities in these waters, with a more effective fisheries management regime geared to business and environmental sustainability, the Scottish Government could impart powerful momentum to coastal and island communities at no cost to the taxpayer."

"The government might also wish to top up this impetus with grant funding into innovation and areas of strategic interest."

"Unlike many other industries based on the use of natural resources, responsibly-managed fish catching could underpin coastal



CHANCE: SFF chief executive Bertie Armstrong says it's time for politicians to work together and deliver for coastal communities

and island communities indefinitely.

"A reinvigorated catching sector could be expected to generate significant knock-on effects in investment and employment onshore, from marine engineering and electronics to seafood processing and distribution."

"But to achieve this sea of opportunity for our coastal

communities would require the Scottish and UK Governments to prevent access to our fishing grounds being conceded as part of the Brexit negotiations."

He added: "Control over access is the most powerful means we have of ensuring that our own natural resources are allocated fairly and to the best possible use.

It's time for Scotland's two governments to work together and deliver for coastal communities.

"If we get it right, it can kick start a secure and sustainable future for our fishermen, their families and the thousands who rely on the bounty of the sea for their livelihoods."

"This is a sea of opportunity that we must not

squander." According to the SFF, which set out its Brexit plea in a briefing note to MSPs ahead of today's Holyrood parliamentary debate on the EU referendum result and its likely impact on Scotland's rural economy, non-UK vessels net more than half of the fish caught within 200 miles of the UK.

Last week, UK Fishing

Minister George Eustice told MPs it was "unfair" that the rest of the European Union currently benefits more from access to UK waters than the other way round.

And in a sign that fishing issues could feature among Brexit talks, he said the industry was "right to recognise the strength" of the UK's negotiating position.

DOUNREAY Firm to keep it local on project

BY MARK LAMMEY

Amec Foster Wheeler has won a £7million contract to build a new effluent treatment plant at the Dounreay nuclear test site in Caithness.

The engineering and project management firm vowed to make use of the local supply chain to deliver the plant and to offer secondment opportunities to Dounreay graduates.

All liquid effluent from the new plant will be managed, processed and discharged by pipeline to the site's existing treatment facility, an Amec spokesman said.

Andy White, vice president for decommissioning at Amec's Clean Energy Europe business, said it was "an important project" and added: "The combination of our nuclear expertise and our experience as a contractor is instrumental in this work to support the clean-up of the site for future generations."

Stephen Adamson, Dounreay head of commercial, said: "We are particularly pleased to announce this partnership as it is the first contract to be awarded since Dounreay introduced a policy requiring our biggest suppliers to think about how they can help us deliver our socio-economic commitments."

Energy chief backs women's science group Robogals

UNIVERSITY

BY KEITH FINDLAY

Aberdeen entrepreneur Jeanette Forbes has backed a new Aberdeen University group trying to encourage more young women to develop an interest in science and technology.

The chief executive of energy sector-focused information technology company PCL Group got involved in the Robogals volunteers after they turned to her for support.

She said: "I was really impressed with what they were trying to achieve and

that they had started up the group, volunteering their own time to set it up with very little resource."

"I just had to get involved and try and help them achieve their goal."

"I firmly believe that our oil and gas sector, whilst going through challenging times, still provides excellent, long-term career opportunities for our young people who are the future pioneers."

"Developments in technology means that the dynamics and skills requirement of the industry is changing, and I do all I can to encourage young



From left, Zoe Chu, Robogals chapter president, Jeanette Forbes and Laura Ong

women, in particular, to give serious consideration to the energy sector as an

exciting and worthwhile career which can benefit from their skills and pro-

vide them with great opportunities."

Robogals is an international student-run organisation which aims to inspire, engage and empower young women to consider studying engineering and related fields by hosting engineering and science-based workshops in local schools.

After being launched in Australia in 2008, the scheme now has more than 30 chapters across 10 countries.

The Aberdeen University group was set up earlier this year after Laura Ong, a second year chemical engi-

neering student, and two friends attended a Robogals convention in Cambridge.

Ms Ong said: "We came back really enthused and decided we didn't just want to sign up as volunteers, we wanted to set up a new chapter."

"We would have really struggled without the help we've received from Jeanette."

"She has really enabled us and supported us, not only by providing equipment and giving us advice," said Ms Ong.

Aldi good to go with upgrades

The British arm of Aldi has said it will invest £300million in store revamps after posting another year of record sales, although profits were again hit by the supermarket price war.

The cash will be used to spruce up its fixtures for beers, wines and spirits and fresh produce, as well as a new "food to go" feature, with more than 100 stores to be refurbished in 2017.