

Cross-Party Group on Maritime and Shipbuilding Minutes

Tuesday 12th December at 1pm

Present

MSPs

Paul Sweeney MSP, Chair
Graham Simpson MSP
Neil Bibby MSP

Invited guests

John Wood
Bernie Hamilton

Non-MSP Group Members

Stuart Ballantyne
Callum McCallum
Hugh Munro
John Strang
Niall Carney
Luke Hendriksen
Blair Moglia
Patrick Carnie
John MacSween
Kevin Hobbs
Brian Fulton
Duncan Cunningham
Warrick Malcolm
Tom McKee
Sam Mayall
Andy Harmer
Erkan Oterkus
Sam Mayall
Stuart Gallacher

Apologies

Daniel Johnson MSP
Jack Norquoy
David Tydeman

1. Welcome

Paul welcomed everyone in person and online to our meeting and stated that it was the 2023 AGM for the CPG Maritime and Shipbuilding. Paul explained that the meeting would begin with the nomination of office bearers and the approval of the previous meetings minutes and would be followed by a presentation from the guest speaker John Wood.

2. Election of Office Bearers and minutes of previous meeting

Minutes of Meeting September 11th – Stuart Gallacher proposed and seconded by Paul Sweeney

Convener – Paul Sweeney was nominated as Convener by Stuart Gallacher and seconded by Neil Bibby

Vice Convenors – Graham Simpson was nominated by Paul Sweeney and seconded by Stuart Gallacher. Stuart McMillan was nominated by Paul Sweeney and seconded by Stuart Gallacher

All nominations were accepted, and the minutes approved.

3. Presentation from Harland and Wolff

John Wood from Harland and Wolff was invited to speak on the topic of the National Shipbuilding Strategy (NSbS) and the work of Harland and Wolff.

Paul welcomed John Wood and praised his work of reviving a company that had been experiencing consistent decline.

Company Overview – John discussed the current focus of Harland and Wolff, the role he plays as CEO and their current vision. Note was made of the journey they had been to save a company that was on the brink of collapse. Shipyards across the globe are going into administration, people are being hired and fired and then going out of business. A key part of their strategy was about doing something different.

John outlined an overview of their shipyards, discussing the four group holdings based in Belfast, Appledore, Methil and Arnish. John stated that it's important to have a wider footprint around the UK, so you are not drawing on the same pockets of labour.

Discussion of the five markets and sectors: defence, commercial, energy, cruise & ferry, and renewables. Five markets are a struggle to maintain, and there is a state of flux with some markets up and some going down. Those in a good place now were defence and cruise and ferry. Also, to John's surprise the company was in a good place with energy. He argued that this was because there has been a realisation that 2030 for everything to be green and renewable is not going to happen. People are realising there must be an investment in the current infrastructure to keep it going.

John discussed how important growing the workforce was for the future of shipbuilding. Currently have 142 apprentices across the group, growing to 175 in August 2024. Employee engagement surveys suggested that employees felt valued, safe, and supported.

4. Questions and Contributions

Stuart Ballantyne asked about nuclear, specifically about mmrs micromodular reactors and if H&W are doing any work with that

John said that there was a little bit of work being done in the nuclear sector out of Arnish. Not skilled up on the whole package yet as far as the complete modular piece goes but involved in sup components of that. John made it clear that nuclear is an area that will grow, and H&W have built bridges and put out offers to other yards. Stated that they don't care where the work comes from, don't seem competitors being off limits. It's about working together.

Graham Simpson MSP asked about the possibility of the metal yard and the small vessel replacement programme. Asked if H&W are against a direct award of that to Ferguson's.

Akin asked if you can provide more information on the Centre for Excellence.

5. AOB

Tom McKee asked that the recording of the meeting and presentation was sent round to attendees.

6. Close

Paul thanked everyone for attending the meeting and the work that had been done over the past year. He noted excitement about the work the CPG had planned for 2024 and wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.