

Historic visit to sea mast

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THE first ever maintenance visit to a Round Three offshore wind asset has been successfully completed from Grimsby.

A team of engineers from RES, together with contractors, sailed to the Hornsea meteorological mast to perform the first duties of a five-year contract, the winning of which was reported in this month's Business Telegraph supplement.



AT SEA: The Hornsea meteorological mast.

The company, which has a growing presence in the town, will make six-monthly scheduled visits to the 120m SMart Wind structure, where wind speed, direction and other vital data is being recorded to help in the advanced development of the 4GW farm, which if on land would stretch from Liverpool to North East Lincolnshire. The success was toasted at a special event at Humber Cruising Association, attended by Grimsby MP Austin Mitchell, council leader Chris Shaw and members of Grimsby Renewables Partnership, on the return of the team from the mast, more than 60 miles out.

Chris Holden, offshore operations manager at RES, said: "The importance of this visit to the met mast cannot be underestimated.

"This was the first maintenance visit to a North Sea Round Three asset. It was operated from Grimsby and it really puts us on the map, showing that Grimsby is the place where operations

and maintenance activities for any of the Round One, Round Two and now Round Three wind farms can be undertaken from. We should all be proud.

"It is a fantastic achievement for RES, Port of Grimsby East and Tidal Transit and the town. We stand together at the beginning of Round Three, we are already operating in Round One and Round Two, and have the potential to build a solid and sustainable operations and maintenance business for the future."

Norfolk-based Tidal Transit, which sees Grimsby as a key operations base, provided the vessel, Eden Rose, and the crew.

This was one of the first contracts for her, having only been launched by a Spanish shipyard on March 30. Sister vessel Ginny Louise was unveiled to the industry in Grimsby in January.

Giving an insight into the nature of the work, completed over a five-day period, Mr Holden said: "The RES team that visited the mast undertook a series of planned maintenance tasks, including the replacement of a faulty aircraft warning light, more than 120m above sea level. The mast is designed to move 'slightly'. Slightly is an interesting term, as at 120m high, the mast moves about 2m side to side. The experience is unnerving to even experienced climbers, so well done, guys!"

The event also provided an opportunity to take a snapshot of the activity underway. Mr Holden said a recent weather day - when vessels are unable to sail because "Mother Nature is showing us who is boss," - revealed 22 vessels operating in the sector moored up in the former fish docks.

He said: "Port of Grimsby East and the Royal Dock, with its new deep-water facility, are starting to come alive again after a period of decline. With the new £3 million Centrica base and operating assets costing more than £1 billion, the investment from major utilities is already here.

"Grimsby is already benefiting from the Centrica Round One and Round Two wind farms, and survey work for E.on, RWE and Dong, whose offshore wind farms are due to commence construction shortly."

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