

New offshore wind boat completes first sailing from Grimsby

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A NEW offshore wind support vessel has completed its maiden voyage from Grimsby.

The Tia Elizabeth sailed from Port of Grimsby East to the site of the proposed Hornsea wind farm 78 miles offshore last Tuesday.



Twelve offshore technicians from renewable energy developer RES spent four days at sea, carrying out maintenance and checks on the Hornsea meteorological mast.

The mast is recording data about weather conditions, which will be used to decide where to position the turbines.

The 20 metre vessel, which was chartered from Norfolk-based Tidal Transit, is wider and more spacious than its two sister ships, Eden Rose and Ginny Louise, which also had their first sailings out from Grimsby,

RES has been maintaining the Hornsea mast for the past two years, but offshore operations manager Chris Holden said the recent extension to the lock gates means it can now operate out of Grimsby 24/7.

The gates were enlarged to accommodate 28 metre long vessels, whereas before it could only accommodate boats 17 metres long.

Mr Holden said: "It is a really big improvement to us as operators and means we can work much

more flexibly, whereas before we were controlled by the tide. Now larger vessels can get inside the lock gates and can therefore go out in all tides."

Echoing those sentiments, Roger Smith, marine operations manager for Port of Grimsby East, said: "By developing this system we have enhanced the capacity of Grimsby as an operations and maintenance base moving into the future, which is borne out by the fact we have attracted companies like RES, Siemens, Centrica, E.ON."

As well as being wider and more spacious than its sister ships, the Tia Elizabeth is also 15 decibels quieter. It has sleeping quarters for four crew and 12 offshore workers, a galley containing fridges and freezers and a seating area with satellite TV.

Leo Hambro, a director of Tidal Transit, said: "Since our first two ships were launched we have learned more about how our customers use the boats and made some changes accordingly."