

Award-winning Docking firm embraces new opportunities on the horizon

Lynn News 02/05/2014



In the three years since Docking firm Tidal Transit was founded it has already experienced an amazing voyage into the business of supporting the growing off-shore wind industry.

Back in 2011 the crew transfer business was formed with just two people and its annual turnover realised £100,000. Last year, with a staff of 28, that figure has escalated to £1.9 million.

And with plenty of opportunities on the horizon, Tidal Transit has its sights set on even greater things in the future.

Its success story has been recognised in the Mayor's Awards for Business Achievement 2013 when it took the prize for Small Growing Business, an accolade of which the firm is justifiably proud.

Operations director Adam Wright and commercial director Leo Hambro paid tribute to their team. "It's a great honour for us to have won and we are very proud of our staff who have

helped us achieve this," said Leo.

"We will be back next year and have the sole aim of winning the Mayor's prize for Business of the Year."

The firm started with its first crew transfer vessel, the Ginny Louise followed a few months later in 2012 by its sister vessel the Eden Rose. The fleet was joined in September last year by a third vessel, the Tia Elizabeth, which went straight to work on an 18-month contract to service the Sheringham Shoal Offshore Wind Farm. Clinching this was a massive boost to the firm's confidence for its future investment plans for more vessels.

And just a few weeks away, a fourth vessel, the Kitty Petra, is due to be completed by Spanish boatbuilders Mercurio Plastics, which has built the entire fleet. Tidal Transit has the preferential right to the use of the mould, which produces vessels specially designed to transfer technicians working on the turbines and which can accommodate crew for overnight stays.

The boats are capable of handling some of the worst sea conditions and in December last year the business was celebrating the completion of 20,000 safe passenger transfers from its vessels to wind turbines in the North Sea.

Plans are already in place for the significant development of offshore wind farm operations off the shores of East Anglia with the renewable energy industry growing at a phenomenal rate. "We are well located for a vast amount of construction which will happen off East Anglia, but we are not geographically limited," said Leo. " We could operate in Denmark or Germany, for instance. There are a lot of projects taking off in Europe."

Diversification is also a possibility in the future, such as investing in tug boats.

Adam continues to run his successful Norfolk Fishing Trips, the forerunner to Tidal Transit, and the two businesses work side by side, with his fishing boat sometimes used for survey work or as a training ground for new crews.

The imminent arrival of the Kitty Petra means that the firm will be looking to recruit two more skippers and four more crew members. It also intends to take on apprentices.

"We are always looking for enthusiastic people to come and work for us and learn the skills involved in the business, whether it's admin in the office or offshore," said Leo.

With one local prestigious award under its belt, the ambition is also to achieve the Queen's Award for Enterprise, an accolade achieved previously by Leo's father, Peter, the founder and chairman of a gold mining firm, who is also the non-executive chairman of Tidal Transit.

The sponsors of the Mayor's Award for Small Growing Business was Adrian Flux.