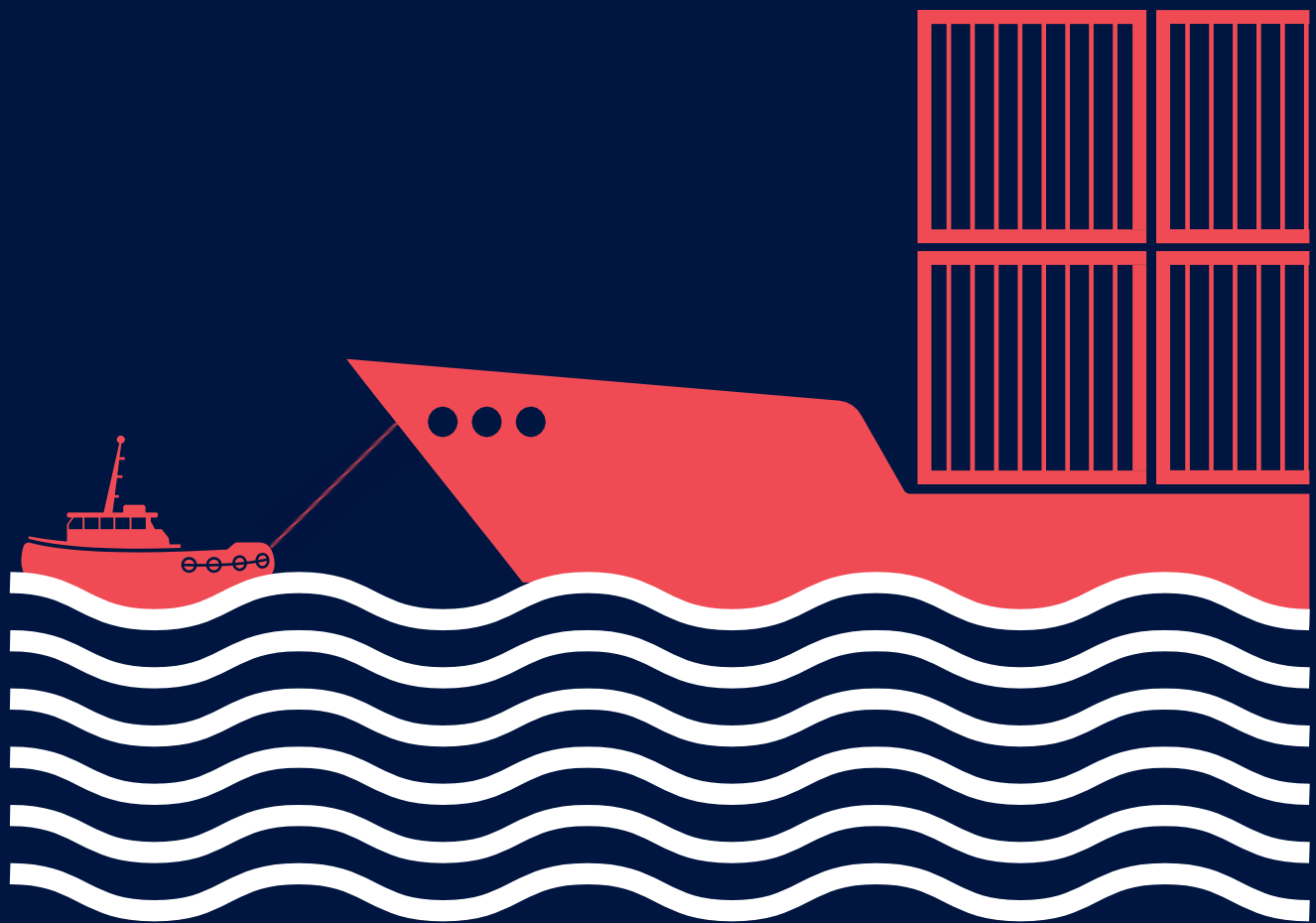


# FORTH PORTS

PMSC ANNUAL REVIEW 2023





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# ABOUT FORTH PORTS



**8**

Ports on the  
Forth, Tay  
& Thames

**3<sup>rd</sup> largest**

port group in the UK

Statutory Harbour Authority

**Forth & Tay**

**£ 1 BILLION**

Contributed to the UK  
economy annually

**35,000,000**

Tonnes of cargo per annum



**£ 1 BILLION  
CONTINUALLY  
INVESTING**

in key  
infrastructure

**Key partner: Thames Freeport & Forth Green Freeport**





# CHIEF HM INTRODUCTION

The Forth and Dundee Port Authorities aim to undertake and regulate marine operations so as to safeguard the harbours, rivers, river users, the public and the environment. Forth Ports comply with the requirements of the Port Marine Safety Code when carrying out all marine operations as confirmed by the annual audit conducted by our independent Designated Person. Our compliance to the Port Marine Safety Code was confirmed to the Maritime and Coastguard Agency and is next due in March 2025. This booklet sets out the charges of Forth Ports Limited as Statutory Harbour Authority and Competent Harbour Authority in respect of pilotage services, the granting of pilotage exemption certificates, conservancy and anchorage.

The Annual Performance Review is prepared in order that the Forth and Tay Port Authorities can report on the performance of the Authorities to the Board of Forth Ports Limited as required by the Port Marine Safety Code. This report is a summary of the activities over the year and is prepared in addition to the annual report that the Designated Person presents to the Board.

2023 has continued to see a return to normal following Covid, most notably the return of cruise in large numbers to the Forth and Tay. This is expected to continue into 2024.

We are now seeing a transition from a hydrocarbon-based traffic towards renewables, in particularly Offshore Wind. In Dundee, we welcomed the first vessels to the new dedicated offshore wind berth for NNG. In Leith, we started the building of the new outer berth at the Port of Leith. This berth will allow the larger offshore wind vessels which are too large to enter the port of Leith to berth. This berth will be completed late summer 2024.

Forth Ports commitment to being carbon neutral by 2032 (Scope 1 and 2) and net zero by 2042 was announced at the start of October 2023. Within the Marine department, we are committed to reducing our carbon footprint through modernising our fleet of craft and improving efficiency of our operation through reduced energy consumption and streamlining our operations.

An example of this is the two new Pilot vessels on order with Holyhead Marine, which will meet the latest standards of fuel efficiency and emissions. These are due to be delivered at the start of 2025.

In 2024 the Marine Department will undertake more stakeholder engagement and would encourage all users of the Forth and Tay to participate and get in touch through the year.

Alan McPherson

Chief Harbour Master  
Forth Ports Limited





# VESSEL ACTIVITY

## Forth

In 2023, there were a total of 1928 vessel calls with a total DWT of 27.5M tonnes to the ports on the Forth. Average length of vessel was 130m. This was down slightly on 2022 where there were 1961 calls with a total DWT of 30.8M tonnes. However, average vessel length was the highest it has ever been which shows that vessels are getting larger despite the reduction of traditionally large Hound Point traffic which has reduced from 20M tonnes in 2013 to just over 11m tonnes in 2023.

Areas that saw the biggest change in traffic numbers were:

Anchorage-	up 19%
Grangemouth-	down 8%
Hound Point-	down 24%
Newhaven-	up 60%
South Queensferry-	up 100%

All other ports had similar traffic numbers to 2022.

## Tay

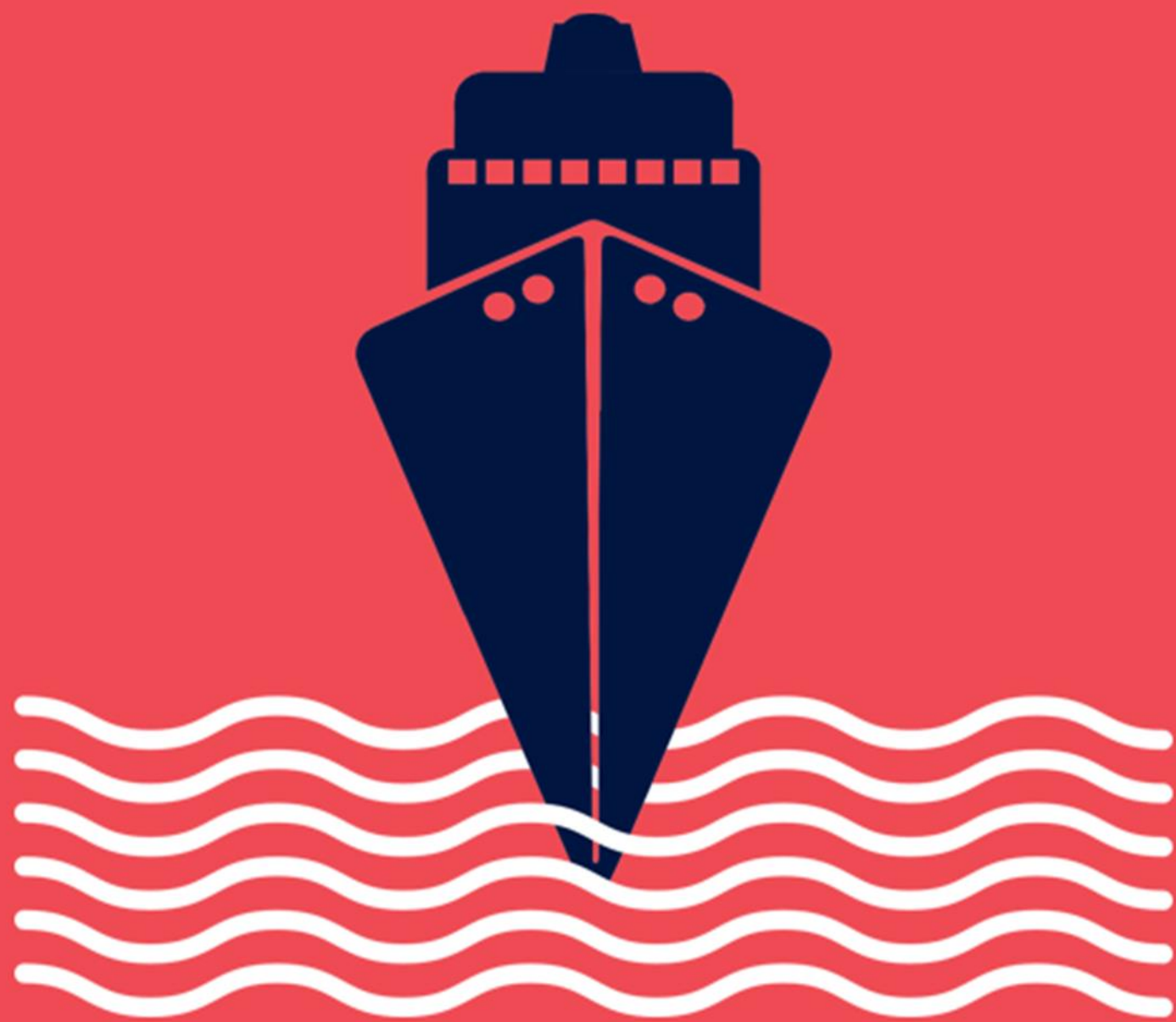
In 2023 there were 237 vessel calls with a total DWT of 1.2M tonnes. Average LOA was 107m. Vessel calls were up 15% on 2022, though total DWT were down by 13%. This indicates increased smaller traffic (mainly due to offshore wind support vessels).

## Towage

Ship Assist Towage in all Forth Ports locations is undertaken by Targe Towing and Svitzer. All towage activity is licenced and audited to ensure the highest levels of operational safety. All ship assist towage is carried out by STCW trained Masters.







# PILOTAGE

**Pilotage is a safety critical function. The Port Authority, Pilots and tug operators met formally on a regular basis to ensure the highest levels of safety are maintained, full minutes of these meetings are kept.**

## Forth

Pilotage on the Firth of Forth is provided by the Association of Forth Pilots. In total, there are 24 pilots authorised on the Forth. Following retirements in 2023, 4 new pilots were recruited to the association and are making their way through the licence levels.

A total of 3909 acts of pilotage were carried out in 2023, down 3% on 2022. Main areas of reduction were Grangemouth and Hound Point.

There were no PEC certificates issued or used in 2023.

Regular meetings of the Senior Pilotage Committee and the Pilotage committee were carried out in 2023, with Pilots also attending the relevant PMSC meetings as required.

A formal procedure is in place to ensure pilots maintain their expertise, this includes not only an Authorisation re-validation process but also an annual review of the number of individual pilotage acts completed at each location, training, incidents and overall performance. In addition, simulator training continued throughout 2023 at the Marine Simulation centre at South Tyneside College.

The Association of Forth Pilots maintained their accreditation to the ISPO standard in 2023.

## Tay

Pilotage on the river Tay is provided by the Dundee Pilots Ltd. In 2023, a total of 476 acts were carried out, an increase of 18%. 10 of these pilotage acts were for vessels to and from Perth, same as in 2022.

An additional Pilot was recruited in 2023 to cover an anticipated retirement in 2024.

There were no PEC certificates issued or used in Dundee.

Regular meetings with Dundee Pilots were carried out in 2023, with Pilots also attending the relevant PMSC meetings as required.





# MARINE DEPARTMENT

## **Forth and Tay Navigational Service (FTNS)**

**Forth Ports is committed to maintain an effective VTS in accordance with UK National, IALA and IMO standards. This includes ensuring infrastructure is properly maintained and upgraded to safeguard continued operation.**

Forth Ports VTS is Forth and Tay Navigation Service. FTNS is manned 24/7 to provide a VTS service for both the Forth and the Tay, as such they plan, schedule and oversee all vessel movements. FTNS is manned by Assistant Harbour Masters who are all either Class 1 Master Mariners or have obtained Harbour Master certification and VTS Operators who all hold the MCA C103 certificate.

To carry out its function of regulating and scheduling vessel movements, together with safeguarding vessels, personnel and the environment FTNS have at their disposal a range of state-of-the-art equipment. This includes Kongsberg radar and tracking systems, VHF coverage, Automatic Identification System (AIS), CCTV and meteorological and tide monitoring equipment. The radar, AIS and VHF coverage not only allows for real time information to be provided to FTNS but also provides redundancy cover in the event of a malfunction of any of the systems, all of which enhances the safety of navigation on the river. VHF transmissions of all the main marine VHF channels operated in both rivers are recorded together with telephone conversations in the Operations Room and the Marine Emergency Centre. CCTV at the entrances to the four main ports is also recorded along with a radar picture playback facility.

Forth Ports is committed to updating the equipment utilised by VTS, this includes the latest RADAR and AIS monitoring equipment, as well as installing a state of the art port management system to increase efficiency and enhance safety in the Forth and Tay estuaries.

## **Stakeholder engagement**

The Forth Ports Marine department carry out an annual Stakeholder event that anyone can attend. It consists of an update on Forth Ports activity and how it will impact on all Marine users, be they Commercial or Leisure. Marine safety awareness is also an important aspect of these sessions and any person with an interest in the Forth is encouraged to attend.

In addition to the annual event, Forth Ports Marine department are available to meet with any interested parties and speak about Forth Ports Marine activity. These include school visits, local interest groups and Rotary Clubs.

Please contact Forth Ports marine at [marine@forthports.co.uk](mailto:marine@forthports.co.uk) if you want to get in touch.





# CONSERVANCY

Forth Ports mark and maintain appropriate navigational channels to all ports within their jurisdiction on both the Forth and Tay. Depths of channels and navigational marks are agreed through consultation following risk assessment to ensure that the channels provide a safe passage to all the ports and berths.

Forth Ports will ensure survey programme is maintained and survey charts are published, and relevant data sent to UKHO within 8 weeks of survey. Through appropriate maintenance and response ensure ATON availability meets NLB targets.

## Dredging

Dredging in all ports continued to be carried out under a five-year contract by UK Dredging, all ports and channels continue to be maintained to their published depths.

A total of 97.5 days were utilised by the trailer suction dredger and 54 days for grab dredging in areas that fall under the responsibility of Forth Ports, with a total of 1,179,983 m<sup>3</sup> being dredged. This is an increase in volume of 5.985% on 2023. Forth Ports also conducted ploughing operations over all ports in 2023.

## Hydrographic Surveying

Surveys continued to be conducted using Forth Ports in-house hydrographic survey facilities, with support from the GIS function.

## Aids to Navigation

In 2023 we completed the painting of Oxcars lighthouse as part of an on-going maintenance and upgrade programme. In 2024, Fidra lighthouse will be converted to solar. The maintenance of Aids to Navigation was conducted under contract by Briggs Marine who follow a routine maintenance programme as well as responding to emergency call outs. All aids met availability apart from Dundee Cat 1 which were because of storm damage.

IALA Category	No Of Aids	Total Hours	No Of Failures	OOS Hours	MTTR	MTBF	Availability	Target Availability
<b>Forth Ports Limited</b>								
CAT 1	16	139,776	1	0:00	0:00	139776:00	100.00%	99.80%
CAT 2	87	760,032	10	641:08	64:07	75939:05	99.92%	99.00%
CAT 3	23	200,928	3	330:42	110:14	66865:46	99.84%	97.00%
No Category	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0.00%	0.00%
Totals	126							
<b>Port of Dundee Ltd</b>								
CAT 1	4	34,944	2	3240:11	1620:05	15851:55	90.73%	99.80%
CAT 2	27	235,872	4	2583:57	645:59	58322:01	98.90%	99.00%
CAT 3	3	26,208	2	132:56	66:28	13037:32	99.49%	97.00%
No Category	0	0	0	0:00	0:00	0:00	0.00%	0.00%
Totals	34							







# MARINE REPORTS

## Incidents

**Forth Ports will ensure that through reporting, investigation and analysis ensure all risk assessments, procedures and guidelines are appropriate to prevent any major navigation or pollution incident.**

A total of 70 marine incidents were recorded in 2023. This was 2 more than were reported in 2022, though percentage of which were near misses increased from 84% to 87%.

The most common cause was as a result of a Mechanical or Technical failure, which accounted for 40% of all incidents recorded. The main causes of this are likely to be because of the restrictions on inspection and maintenance during Covid, along with training and spares availability.

The next highest cause was Weather and Environmental conditions, which accounted for 23% of incidents. All other incidents were as a result of failures to follow procedures or regulations, lack of seamanship and failure of communications.

## Pollution reports

2023 saw a doubling of pollution incidents reported. This resulted in our Tier Two responder being called out on three occasions. In all cases, the rapid response helped mitigate the issue and no long-term effects were noted.

Smaller spills were dealt with using Ports own equipment and as before the rapid response helped reduce the effect of any spill.

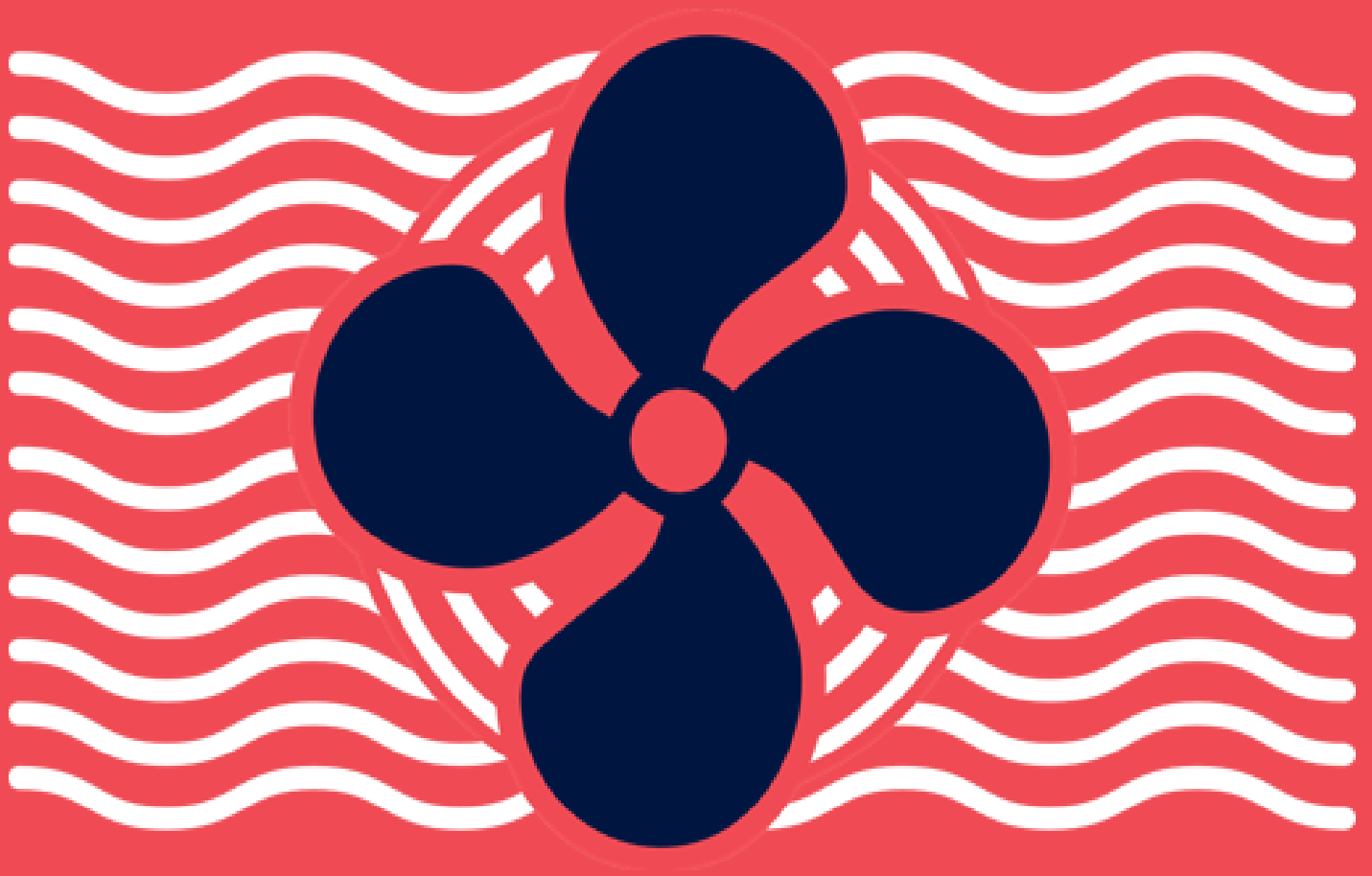
## Exercises

Exercising our Oil spill and emergency plans is key to ensuring a rapid and effective response should the real thing arise. On the Forth this is Clearwater Forth and Emergency Forth. In Dundee it is Dundee Oil Spill and Emergency Tay exercises.

Clearwater Forth takes the form of an annual live exercise and a Tabletop exercise. Emergency Forth exercises are held Biannually. In addition, Dundee Oil Pollution Response Contingency (OPRC) Plan and Emergency Tay exercises carried out in Dundee follow a similar format.

In 2023, the Clearwater Forth multi agency oil pollution exercise was held out in May. This involved a number of external stakeholders and partners and included practical exercising along with the staffing of the Marine Emergency Centre (MEC in Grangemouth. A Clearwater Forth tabletop exercise was held in December and Emergency Forth exercises were held in May and November. In Dundee, an Emergency Tay tabletop exercises were held in October and December. The Dundee OPRC was exercised in August and September.





# OUTLOOK FOR 2024

## **Marine Safety Plan**

Forth Ports has a number of permanent targets to ensure that all activities are carried out in the safest and most efficient way possible. These are highlighted in the previous sections.

In the past, 5 targets have been identified for the coming year. These are based on safety critical activity. From now on though, rather than specify 5 activities, all Marine activity will be carried out with the same level of professionalism and skill regardless of its impact to the department.

## **Long-term planning**

In its place there will be a long term (10 year plus) project, continuing the positive work already done to improve safety and the environment looking at where we see the direction of the future of ports.

By taking a more long-term view, changes can be brought in which positively impact on Health and Safety, Environment and People, whilst maintaining the commerciality of the department in a sustainable way.

We have already started this journey with steps that have been taken in the last 5 years. Greater use of data has informed the decision-making process and will continue to do so.



