

# MP supports marine export drive

Andrew Turner MP supports export drive plans for Isle of Wight marine industry during visit to Seaward Boats yard at Cowes – 28<sup>th</sup> May 2013

Key members of the Isle of Wight marine industry met with their MP Andrew Turner at The Boat Development Co in Cowes last week (23.5.13) to discuss future employment prospects and potential funding to support an export drive for boats built on the Island.

He met with Mike Burnham and Chris Clayton, the new owners of The Boat Development Co, together with Barry and Alison Kimber, founders of the rugged Seaward commercial and leisure motorboat brand built at the Yard. Paul Bertie, Chairman of Cowes Business Association, Craig Nutter, Chairman of the BMF Isle of Wight Committee, John Roberson, publisher of Cowes Yachting magazine, and Stuart Macintosh, the Cowes Harbour Master also contributed to the discussions

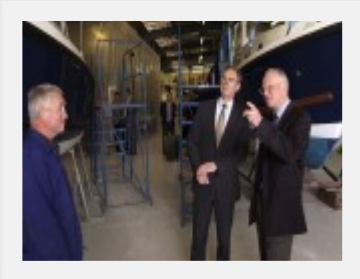
“There are a number of areas where Government initiatives can help us expand our export markets and we are already engaged in discussions with officials to seek support.” said Mike Burnham the MD at Seaward, adding “Funding is available to support exports, and having now had the opportunity to brief Andrew Turner, we look forward to support from everyone in pressing strong claims for the Island’s boatbuilding industry.

The Boat Development Co took over production of Seaward boats in March and currently have three craft in build, and another undergoing a refit.

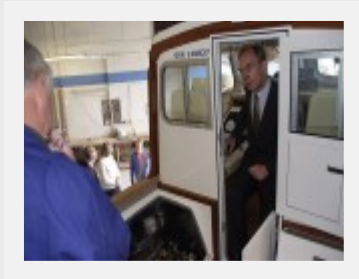
Talking about their own plans for Seaward’s expansion, Burnham added: “We are delighted to have retained so many experienced Seaward employees who are already working on this new phase of developing the Seaward brand and range. We are optimistic that this will lead to expanding employment at the Seaward yard in Cowes.”

The Company will be promoting a revised range of commercial craft at the Seawork Commercial Boat Exhibition between 25-27th June in Southampton, and an example of the Seaward leisure range will again be on display at the PSP Southampton Boat Show in September. The very active Seaward Owners Association will also be gathering for a rally in Bembridge over the weekend of 7-9<sup>th</sup> June.

Andrew Turner agreed: “It was great to see the Seaward boats in production today; to have the opportunity to chat to the workforce and to meet the new owners of the company. I was particularly delighted to hear about the prospect of new employment opportunities on the Isle of Wight. There are really exciting plans for the future of this iconic Island brand and I look forward to seeing them come to fruition.”



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