

Largest UK fast-ferry shipyard order in over 25 years confirmed

The largest fast passenger ferry order for a UK shipyard in over 25 years has been confirmed by MBNA Thames Clippers today. Two new 170 capacity passenger boats will be built at the Wight Shipyard Co on the Isle of Wight, and will join London's growing river transport network in summer 2017.

Representing an investment worth over £6.3million, the order will see the creation of 75 new jobs across the Isle of Wight and London, and the involvement of over 100 businesses in the South of England as part of the delivery supply chain. Plus, MBNA Thames Clippers will be creating two new dedicated apprenticeship roles. The finalisation of the two new fast ferries is the largest ever order for the recently rebranded Wight Shipyard Co (WSC) based on the Isle of Wight.

When the two new fast ferries join the MBNA Thames Clippers' river bus service in central London they will add 14 per cent additional capacity to the company's network. They swiftly follow the addition of two boats in late 2015, in total adding an additional 30 per cent capacity in two years. MBNA Thames Clippers will become the biggest commercial passenger fleet operating solely in English waters when the two newly confirmed boats enter service.

Sean Collins, founder and CEO, MBNA Thames Clippers explains: "In 2016 alone the MBNA Thames Clippers fleet will carry over four million commuters and visitors around London. We are investing in an expanded fleet, built in the UK, as well as exploring new options for piers to enhance London's infrastructure and maximise the River Thames as a thoroughfare. Our commitment to enhancing the London river transport network is moving at a considerable pace.

"This is the first order for the new ship yard following its rebrand. The experience and track record of the company means that we have found a new innovative yard with ambition who shares our vision for high quality, safe and environmentally efficient fast ferries. The complex nature of the tidal Thames means that it takes a specialist design and build team. We are thrilled to have found the right partners using One2three Naval Architects to design the vessels and a UK shipyard for the build, to make this important investment within the British Isles."

The two new boats will enter service in the summer of 2017 and means over £26 million has been invested by MBNA Thames Clippers in their fleet over the past ten years.

Peter Morton CEO of Wight Shipyard Co. added: "Wight Shipyard (formally Shemara Refit LLP) is delighted to be awarded the contract to build two new 35 metre high speed ferries for MBNA Thames Clippers. The company operates a large fleet of high profile ferries on the River Thames and this new order signifies that use of the river as a means of commuter transport is growing quickly.

"We are particularly pleased that these are the first high speed ferries to be built for the company in England as in the past all new MBNA Thames Clippers fast craft have been built in Australia. Having successfully completed the 40 metre Red Jet 6 for the Red Funnel Group we are confident that we will deliver high quality ferries for MBNA Thames Clippers and look forward to a long partnership with them."

Formerly known as Shemara Refit LLP, Wight Shipyard Co specialises in aluminum vessels for the ferry industry and has a reputation for excellent management capabilities and quality workmanship. The yard's most recent delivery was a new 40 metre high speed passenger ferry for Isle of Wight services.

For more information on MBNA Thames Clippers please visit www.thamesclippers.com.

Media enquiries re. MBNA Thames Clippers: Siren Communications:
mbnathamesclippers@sirencomms.com or call 0207 759 1150

Media enquiries re. Wight Shipyard Co.: Justin Merrigan:justinm@wightshipyard.com or call +44 (0)1983 296560

About MBNA Thames Clippers: MBNA Thames Clippers is the leading River Bus service on the River Thames running a 20 minute frequency between key London piers including North Greenwich for The O2, Greenwich, Canary Wharf, Tower, London Bridge, Embankment, Westminster and London Eye for Waterloo, as well as several residential piers. In April 2013 the company won the contract to run a River Bus service from Putney to Blackfriars which allows the boats to now additionally stop at Putney, Wandsworth Riverside, Chelsea Harbour and Cadogan Pier, a total of 21 piers across the capital.

Co-founded in 1999 by Sean Collins (CEO) and Alan Woods (former Chairman), the company began with one boat servicing 80 passengers a day between Greenland and Savoy piers. Now 17 years on, numbers have significantly risen to over 3.8 million passengers in 2015. Making travel by river even easier, passengers are now able to use contactless payment and Oyster pay as you go with MBNA Thames Clippers.

In 2006 AEG, owners and operators of The O2, acquired the majority stake in the company and since then the fleet has substantially grown to 15 vessels. River Bus Express for The O2 is an additional fast direct service between London Eye, and London Bridge to The O2 at North Greenwich on arena event nights. For more info visit the website www.thamesclippers.com or follow @ThamesClippers on Twitter and Instagram.

About Wight Shipyard Co: Wight Shipyard Co is Europe's leading high speed craft and aluminium ship builder with state-of-the-art facilities on Britain's Isle of Wight.

Wight Shipyard Co started life in 2010 as Shemara Refit LLP, born out of a unique project to manage the revival of a magnificent motor yacht to her former glory. Since then the business has grown exponentially and in 2016 was restyled as Wight Shipyard Co sealing its future under a clear and recognisable identity.

With first class managerial, design and technical expertise Wight Shipyard Co fast ferries deliver high performance with cutting edge designs and the most comfortable passenger accommodation in fuel-efficient hullforms.