

“I will miss Gordon’s smile, his laugh, and his energy”

3 February 2017

Gordon Aikman, who raised £500,000 for MND research and successfully campaigned for a doubling of the number of MND nurses in Scotland, has died. Gordon worked for the Labour Party in the Scottish Parliament and was the Director of Research at Better Together, making a massive contribution to Scotland. You can donate to MND Scotland [here](#).

Below is a comment from Kezia Dugdale following the announcement of Gordon’s death:

“I am utterly bereft. Although we all knew time was precious, Gordon’s death comes as a shock.

“I have lost a best friend and the world has lost a man who made it a better place. I will keep Gordon’s husband Joe and all his family in my thoughts and prayers. The wedding of Gordon and Joe was one of the happiest days of my life. I will treasure those memories.

“I will miss Gordon’s smile, his laugh, his energy, his brilliant dance moves and terrible singing voice, and his positive outlook on life despite the hand he was dealt towards the end. I will miss his advice and I will miss campaigning with him to advance the causes dear to us. But most of all I will miss just spending time with my friend.

“All of us in the Labour Party will be forever grateful for his commitment to our movement, particularly during his time working in the Scottish Parliament and his pivotal role in the Better Together campaign. His death will be mourned by all those who had the pleasure to work alongside him.

“Although we grieve for Gordon, we must not allow our sadness to erase the many happy memories we have of his time with us. To respond to his MND diagnosis by raising more than £500,000 for research into this horrible disease so that others don’t have to suffer like he did should inspire us all.

“Gordon’s constant determination to do good for others was an antidote to a world so full of fear and anger. I hope that will be his legacy.”

Press release: Milestone reached for Ipswich Flood Barrier scheme

The cofferdam, which is a structure that can be pumped dry to enable construction of the barrier to take place below the river bed level, is now in place.

Over the last few months, VBA the contractors working for the EA, have installed the cofferdam, pumped it dry and they have now excavated the river silts and gravel.

The next stage is to pour the base slab, which is more than 700 cubic metres of reinforced concrete. At the moment the steel reinforcement is being placed by a team of 20 people and the first pour of the base slab will be completed in the next couple of weeks.

The actual tidal gate is being fabricated in Holland and will be delivered later in the year when the concrete structure and control building have been completed.

Progress has been made elsewhere on the site, with the foundations for the flood walls and the control building now installed.

The project, which will reduce the risk of flooding to 1,608 homes and 422 businesses and support key infrastructure, has been partnership funded by: the Environment Agency, Ipswich Borough Council, Department for Communities and Local Government, the Haven Gateway Partnership, and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership.

EA project manager Andrew Usborne said:

The integrated team at the barrier are making good progress and are on programme to complete the works in spring 2018.

I am really looking forward to the next key milestone, which is the delivery of the tidal gate from Holland later in the summer.

Nick Culshaw, VBA operations director, said:

It has been a real honour to be working with and supporting the EA on this vital project in Ipswich. In order to protect around 2,000 properties, both commercial and residential, within the town from flooding in the future, a 20m wide tidal barrier gate, along with the relevant controls, will be installed.

The barrier, along with additional flood defences undertaken by VBA, will prevent any surge tides and allow the control of fluvial flow as required in the future.

The scheme is due to be completed in 2018.

If you're worried about the risk of flooding to you or a vulnerable person check your flood risk and other information here: <http://ow.ly/SWdMz>. Sign up for Flood Warnings here: <http://ow.ly/SWdVp>. Alternatively you can call Floodline on: 0345 988 1188 or sign up for Facebook Flood alerts at: <http://ow.ly/SWdVp>

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[News story: 'Catalogue of failures'](#)

led to collision in the Humber in May 2016

David Carlin, the master of the World War II motor launch Peggotty and Thomas Neilsen, master of the Danish flagged Petunia Seaway were both prosecuted under section 58 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995, as a result of an investigation by the Maritime & Coastguard Agency.

Both pleaded guilty to conduct endangering ships under the Act when they appeared at Hull Magistrates Court today (3rd February).

At around 4.30am on 19th May 2016 Peggotty, a 50 foot vessel, had left Grimsby Docks making its way to Hull. Although this was a private voyage, Mr Carlin as a professional master mariner and Humber pilot was very experienced.

However, despite the thick fog he failed to comply with a number of regulations to keep his and other vessels safe. These included failing to make his vessel's radar operational, failing to make sound signals and failing to ensure all the navigation lights were working. He had also not taken the conditions into account or prepared an effective passage plan for the journey and was relying on an untested mobile phone app.

At the same time, the Petunia Seaway, a vehicle transport vessel, 200 metres long and 34,000 gross tonnage was making its way down the Humber towards Grimsby. Its master Thomas Neilsen, from Denmark, was on the bridge and in charge. He allowed the vessel to proceed at 14 knots in zero visibility, without making sound signals. Mr Neilsen also failed to properly monitor and assess the ship's radar to appreciate they were bearing down on the Peggotty.

Mr Carlin on his part had not realised the Peggotty was in the main shipping channel and was effectively blind to the collision course his vessel was on with the Petunia Seaway. Just before 4.50am the two vessels collided almost head on. The Peggotty was able to pass down the port side of the much larger Petunia Seaways, scraping down the side as it went. However the impact was enough to damage the hull of the Peggotty and it began to take on water. Mr Carlin was able to broadcast a Mayday call and the two on board were picked up by a nearby pilot boat before the Peggotty sank and was lost.

Today they were sentenced at Hull Magistrates Court. The district judge said that Mr Carlin for his part had a catalogue of failures, while Mr Neilsen's actions were insufficient.

As well as fining both of them £3,000 each, the district judge also ordered Mr Neilsen to pay £9,318.20 in costs as well as a £170 surcharge. Mr Carlin was told he would have to pay £6,568 costs plus the £170 surcharge.

Gwen Lancaster, surveyor in charge at the Maritime & Coastguard Agency's Hull Marine Office said: 'I am both surprised and disappointed that this

collision, which could easily have resulted in far worse consequences for those onboard the Peggotty, occurred in the first place.

‘Both vessels were under the command of experienced professional captains who should have known better. This whole incident reflects complacency on their part in addition to a blatant disregard for the rules designed to prevent collisions occurring at sea.

‘The Maritime & Coastguard Agency will prosecute those who endanger themselves and others in this way and our message is clear – there is no room for complacency where safety is concerned.

‘Masters of vessels must ensure they are properly prepared for the prevailing conditions and proceed in a safe manner whilst using all means of safe navigation at their disposal, to best effect.’