NEW HELICOPTER FOR GB AND IRELAND LIGHTHOUSE CONTRACT

On 7 October helicopter operator PDG took ownership of a new EC135 helicopter (illustrated) with call sign G-GLAA. This helicopter has been purchased specifically to support the tri-General Lighthouse Authorities (GLA) helicopter services contract.

The GLAs of the United Kingdom and Ireland are: the Corporation of Trinity House with responsibility for the waters of England, Wales, the Channel Islands and Gibraltar; the Commissioners of Northern Lighthouses, known as the Northern Lighthouse Board –Scotland and the Isle of Man and the Commissioners of Irish Lights, known as Irish Lights – all of Ireland. The GLAs operate under statute – the Merchant Shipping Act, 1995.

Handover of the machine was carried out during the Helitech exhibition at the London ExCel Centre.

For the three GLAs this is a significant step towards the commencement of the new contract on 1 December 2015. The helicopter will carry out transport and utility operations including personnel transfers and logistics missions between operating bases, lighthouses and support vessels at sea.

Operation of a collaborative helicopter services contract will bring significant financial savings for the three GLAs operating across the UK and Ireland when compared to the three separate contracts that have been in operation until now and will lead to smoother operational planning and improvements through the adoption of best working practice across the three GLAs.

Captain Ian McNaught, Executive Chairman of Trinity House, commented: ‘This new helicopter and the support from PDG will see that helicopter operations across the three General Lighthouse Authorities become more efficient, more cost-effective and continue to make a positive contribution to supporting our network of vital aids to navigation and keeping mariners safe at sea. The ongoing cost reductions and the close working between Trinity House and our sister GLAs are something we are very proud to report.’

Each of the GLAs operates helicopter-capable ships: Trinity House has THV Galatea and THV Patricia; Northern Lighthouse Board, NLV Pharos, and Commissioners of Irish Lights, ILV Granuaile.