

Administrators appointed at 'abruptly closed' Grimsby seafood firm where 80 jobs have been lost

Around 80 jobs have been lost after a significant Grimsby seafood operator abruptly closed, with administrators now appointed.

Cook & Lucas, a specialist importer supplying restaurants, fish and chip shops, wholesalers, retailers, mobile fishmongers and the public, operated from premises in neighbouring Riby Street and Humber Street, where it had a processing factory, smoke house and shop.

Launched in 2016, with directors Adam Croft and Antony Lovett at the helm, it had prided itself on white fish filleting and distribution, reaching sales of £25 million. It was understood the company had ceased trading a fortnight ago, with staff laid off without warning. Extensive enquiries with the business, its auditors and solicitors had left the situation unclear, prior to James Clark and Howard Smith's appointment as joint administrators. They are from international financial advisory business Interpath Advisory.

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The company's secured lender, understood to be Barclays, took steps to protect its position and sought their appointment.

Mr Clark, who is managing director at the global firm Interpath Advisory, said: "Given the circumstances surrounding our appointment, our immediate priority is to take steps to secure the company's assets, while seeking to gather further

information about the company's financial position.”



The Cook and Lucas shop on Riby Street, Grimsby.

(Image: Reach Plc)

Interpath confirmed the company “abruptly closed its plant in Grimsby” on January 10, with approximately 80 members of staff being laid off.

Buyers had not been present for daily markets in Grimsby since January 9. Martyn Boyers, chief executive of Grimsby Fish Dock Enterprises, said: “It is always sad, because there are always victims, particularly the staff. There may well be suppliers who are owed money, and it was a big company, it brought a lot of fish in from Iceland, Denmark, The Faroes and Norway. There will undoubtedly have been issues for suppliers as a result.”

According to sources in the sector, the bulk of the work is understood to have been moved elsewhere, with many of the staff snapped up.

A net profit of £1.3 million on a £24 million turnover had

been reported in the last available accounts, for the year to April 2021, a period it described as “one of the toughest yet for the sector” due to the unprecedented challenges presented by Covid-19.

The company had stayed open longer than many when lockdowns were imposed, in order to continue serving up seafood as an essential business.

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