

Kilfrost hails strong position as it returns to profit amid recovery from Covid disruption

Aircraft de-icer firm Kilfrost has returned to profit following a period of major disruption to the global aviation industry.

The historic North East manufacturer, which operates a Haltwhistle factory, reported operating profit of £1.2m in the year to the end of March 2022, a turnaround from a £235,000 loss the previous year. Turnover at the worldwide exporter increased from £9m to £14.9m during the period in which Kilfrost said the aviation industry was beginning to recover from the impact of pandemic restrictions.

In accounts filed at Companies House, director Gary Lydiate said it had been a good trading year in which the firm had developed a strong position for future growth. A breakdown of Kilfrost turnover showed the majority came from the UK, with Europe and the rest of the world following.

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Mr Lydiate wrote: “For the aviation industry the past 12 months have been the beginning of the recovery phase post Covid. Whilst passenger numbers have been depressed from previous years there was still very positive signs of recovery moving at a pace.

“The past 12 months were also noted for a mild winter. Coupled together this meant a lower, than average, use of aircraft deicing fluids. At the same time the cost of our major raw

material (MPG) remained at a historic high. However, due our contractual pricing mechanisms we remained profitable.

“In the speciality fluids division we continued to make further inroads into Scandinavia which is becoming a core market. For the USA we continue to move ahead but further work needs to be done on sales and marketing.”

Kilfrost was established in Whitley Bay in the 1930s when founder Joseph Halbert invented the first ever de-icing fluid, which was used to help clear football pitches. The firm developed the world's first fluids for the protection of aircraft and introduced radiator anti-freeze used in Antarctic expeditions.

A third generation of the Halbert family now owns the company which also provides deicing products to the rail, energy and infrastructure markets as well as heat transfer fluids to the food and drink industry.

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