

**Date:** 13 January 2023

Reed Boardall

## Reed Boardall looks forward to period of growth after tough year



Leading Yorkshire-based temperature-controlled food storage and distribution business Reed Boardall has battled through one of the most difficult years in its 30 year history as the industry reeled from Covid lockdowns with staff self-isolating while also facing the challenges of rising labour, fuel and energy costs, as well as the UK-wide HGV driver shortage. Despite having also had a number of additional adverse factors with which to contend, the business is now moving forward from a position of strength and planning for continued growth.

In the year to March 2022, turnover grew by 6.2% compared with the previous year, rising from £69.8m to £74.1m. However, in the face of extremely difficult trading conditions, the company sustained a £4.1m loss before taxation. This compares with £705,000 profit in the year ending March 2021.

Marcus Boardall, chief executive of Reed Boardall, said: “There’s no question that it has again been a very difficult year for the industry. We have seen the challenges of rising employment costs and inflation forcing up prices for most operators, while coping with continued disruption as a result of reduced staff levels due to Covid, along with the problem of driver shortages.

“Looking to the future, the pandemic disruption appears to be settling, and we are starting to bear the fruits of the proactive initiatives we have undertaken to establish our own in-house team of drivers – for example, over the last year, we have trained over 20 new recruits from scratch at our own academy, enabling them to become qualified drivers.”

He continues: “Our financial performance was also adversely affected by Reed Boardall being the victim of a criminal cyber-attack, resulting in our IT systems being out of operation for six days. The costs associated with the interruption, loss of revenue and subsequent recovery, were substantial. The situation was exacerbated by bad debt as one of our largest transport customers was placed into administration, although the contract has been taken over by a major retailer.



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“Despite all of these factors, we saw store utilisation and turnover increase, and are confident that better times are ahead. We have established a strong position in the marketplace and we will continue to prove the success of our single site strategy where we are able to serve all our customers’ needs efficiently. I would like to thank our 800-strong team and loyal customers for their continued support as we continue on our growth journey.”

Finance director Sarah Roberts adds: “Given the myriad of pressures on the business over the last 12 months, we have once again put in a resilient performance and are pleased to say that we are now on a much more even keel. Having completed the multi-million pound expansion of one of our cold stores in spring 2021, we have the largest and most modern facility of its kind in the UK. With a capacity of 168,000 pallets, we have continued to see volumes rise since the year end.

“We have also secured additional business in the new financial year and our ability to adapt to an ever-changing industry is enabling us to attract new customers with very specific requirements while still ensuring their integration into our operations complements our existing customer base.”

Based on a dedicated 55-acre site operation in Boroughbridge, North Yorkshire, Reed Boardall has grown to become one of the largest temperature-controlled food distribution businesses in the UK. With a fleet of 200 vehicles operating 24 hours a day, year-round, it delivers 12,000 pallets of frozen food daily from manufacturers across Britain, Europe and further afield to all the UK’s best-known supermarkets. It also provides blast freezing, picking and packaging services.