



We Can Help Make the **WORLD YOUR OYSTER**

inbusiness

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The magazine for Inverness Chamber of Commerce



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Toronto, Ontario



HELPING BUSINESS REALISE GLOBAL AMBITIONS FOR GOODS & SERVICES



by Stewart Nicol,
Chief Executive,
Inverness Chamber
of Commerce



In these challenging times all of us at Inverness Chamber of Commerce are focused on ensuring we do all that we can to actively connect and represent Highland businesses to support their growth. Engaging with businesses, across the whole region, and from every sector, we are able to assess the scale of the challenges we all face. In addition though, we get a real appreciation of the many positive examples there are of businesses that have used this opportunity to innovate and grow, often by developing international markets for their goods and services.

We believe Inverness Chamber of Commerce is uniquely placed locally, through our International Trade Team, to support Highland businesses develop and exploit the many global opportunities that may be closer to hand than we realise. Working closely with colleagues at British Chambers of Commerce and Scottish Chambers of Commerce, we can encourage businesses to explore the opportunities available

through exporting and international trade. Indeed, this is a fundamental part of what the Chambers of Commerce network does locally, nationally and across the whole of the UK. Following on from the success of our Virtual Chicago Trade Mission earlier this year, we are now looking to run a number of further trade missions as part of the wider International Trade Partnership (ITP) Programme run by Scottish Chambers of Commerce and the Scottish Government.

Specifically, Inverness Chamber of Commerce are delighted to be hosting a Scotland-Canada Business Week event in partnership with Lochaber Chamber of Commerce in February 2022. With support from the Scottish North American Business Council, this event will involve two consecutive virtual trade missions, enabling Scottish companies to explore business opportunities in Ontario and British Columbia. Attendees will have access to market awareness workshops as well as learning about the tax and legal implications of doing business in Canada, networking opportunities and pre-arranged B2B meetings based on each company's objectives. An inclusive, well-connected and stable business landscape makes Canada an attractive environment for Scottish companies to do business. As Canada's business and financial capital, Toronto is a growing financial hub in North America. In addition to FinTech, the city is also competitive in almost every other sector, from technology and life sciences to green energy; from fashion and design to food and drink; and from film and television production to music and digital media.



Vancouver, British Columbia

As well as having the chance to explore Ontario, businesses can also opt to attend the virtual mission to British Columbia which has one of North America's most competitive, flexible and supportive business climates, making it an ideal location to start a business or expand existing operations. A stable, welcoming government has streamlined regulations and developed a competitive tax regime, which combined with a dependable legal system and top-ranked quality of life makes British Columbia an optimal location for business opportunities in North America.

Our Scotland-Canada Business Week is open to any business across Scotland interested in exploring Ontario or British Columbia, regardless of their size, sector or whether they are a member of a Chamber of Commerce or not.

The value of virtual trade missions should not be underestimated as they provide an excellent opportunity for businesses to explore new markets and showcase products and services to stakeholders and prospective clients without the associated expense of travel and accommodation. Our experience with the Chicago Trade Mission proved relationships can be established virtually in the first instance, allowing both parties to

fully understand the proposition and potential opportunities before committing to travelling to the market.

We cannot emphasise the value of virtual trade missions enough and would actively encourage Inverness, Highland and indeed any Scottish-based business to get involved.

In addition to this exciting Scotland-Canada Business Week event, we'll be looking to the Far East with a further Virtual Trade Mission to Japan, which we're planning to hold in early summer next year. Further details will become available in due course and all missions being run by the Scottish Chamber of Commerce network are listed in full on their Export Hub Scotland Portal – www.exporthubscotland.com/missions.aspx

If you wish more information locally, please email our International Trade Team at: international@inverness-chamber.co.uk

MEET THE MEMBER

Members tell us what benefits they value

Scott MacDonald

OWNER

FLYING SCOTSMAN UAS

in| Tell us more about Flying Scotsman UAS?

My name is Scott MacDonald and I am a PFCO, GVC and CAA certified and insured drone operator based in Inverness but not limited to the area. My business was born out of a hobby when my wife bought me my drone as a Christmas present a number of years ago, and the passion grew from there. After finding out I was being made redundant from my previous role as a distillery operator, I decided to take the plunge and go full-time in the business. Having spent over 9 years in the Royal Air Force serving all over the world, I think aviation must be in my blood.

in| What services does Flying Scotsman UAS offer?

I provide services ranging from:

- Inspections
- Golf course mapping
- Photography and videography - including fully edited promotional videos
- Hand held filming and photography
- Commercial aerial inspections

Aerial inspections by the means of a drone are second to none. Without the need for working at height permits and the time taken to put out scaffolding, the client is able to have access to the footage within minutes of completing the task. There is also the ability to have a live feed, so the client is able to see in real time what the drone is looking at. Prints of some of my work are available on my website and span across the whole of the Highlands and the Outer Hebrides, some of which may make a fantastic addition to the artwork in your home!

in| What makes you most proud/passionate about Flying Scotsman UAS?

Looking back at what Flying Scotsman began as, a hobby with a toy drone, I'm proud to see it become a reputable, professional, and safety-conscious business. I love being able to see landscapes and architecture from whole new perspectives and the drone provides an environmentally friendly way of taking footage from the air.

in| Can you tell us a little more about your business focus for 2021/22?

My goals over the next 12 months are to expand my current client portfolio and I look forward to the variety and challenge that will bring. Commercial inspections will be a particular area of focus from roof inspections to wind turbines.

in| What would you say has been most valuable to you as a member of Inverness Chamber?

So far what I have found most valuable is the feeling of not being alone, the comfort of having the Chamber there to "have your back" so to speak, really does encourage me to push further with my business. With the restrictions now being lifted, I am really looking forward to getting along to the networking events and meeting other businesses face to face.



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ARTS & BUSINESS SCOTLAND

BCDS Events

The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have reached every corner of the UK and in Scotland the commercial and public sectors face the harsh reality of staff shortages, low morale and a disengaged local community. With markets not only affected by the pandemic, but Brexit before it, these sectors are increasingly seeking support from the culture (arts & heritage) sector to help navigate the brave new, post-pandemic world.

By partnering with the culture sector, both business and public sector organisations have an opportunity to build back better by not only helping themselves, but by supporting local communities in their own regeneration. Not only can such partnerships support businesses financially, helping them reach and engage with new potential customers or clients, but they can also play an instrumental role in future proofing workforces, boosting green credentials and supporting sustainability goals.

This October, businesses and public sector representatives from across the Highlands, including those located in and around Inverness, are being invited to attend an online event that will help demystify the full benefits of partnering with the culture sector, specifically in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Image Credits: Paul Campbell



Hosted by Arts & Business Scotland as part of the new Building Confidence: Developing Skills programme, 'Connecting with Culture' will take place on Tuesday 5 October and will feature expert speakers and

business leaders alongside North of Scotland examples of successful cross sector partnerships.

One of these examples is West Beach Caravan Park, which partnered with Findhorn Bay Arts for the 3rd Findhorn Bay Festival. Staged in unexpected spaces and scenic locations around the Bay of Findhorn, including West Beach Caravan Park, the festival played host to 125 events and performances and sold over 4,500 tickets, with a further 8,000 attendances estimated.

By introducing festival goers to the West Beach Caravan Park, Findhorn Bay Festival greatly increased exposure to visitors and in 2021 a similar partnership could harness the potential of the new 'staycation' visitor economy, while building the cultural tourism appeal of the area as a whole and laying further groundwork for overseas visitors once international travel resumes.

NEW CHOICE BASED MEMBERSHIP MODEL AT INVERNESS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Inverness Chamber is delighted to reveal that we have been working hard behind the scenes on a new choice-based membership model during the pandemic which began roll out to all existing members renewing from the start of April this year.

Our choice-based membership model will give you, as a member or prospective member, the freedom to choose the level of support and engagement you have with Inverness Chamber based on the membership package which is right for you and the needs of your business.

We're really excited to start engaging with you and assisting you as we transition to this new and exciting framework which we are confident will allow us to connect, support and represent you and your business more efficiently and more effectively.

Our membership team will be in touch with existing members regarding transferring your current membership upon your renewal date, however if you wish to change your package prior to renewal we can discuss this and if you are considering joining ICC and want to know more please contact membership@inverness-chamber.co.uk

STUDY BACKS CROMARTY FIRTH AS IDEAL LOCATION TO SUPPORT SCOTLAND'S MAJOR EXPANSION IN OFFSHORE RENEWABLES

The Port of Cromarty Firth welcomes a study by Scottish Enterprise, Highlands and Islands Enterprise and Crown Estate Scotland which backs the Cromarty Firth as an ideal location for an offshore wind marshalling and assembly hub.

The Independent Port Enhancement Study demonstrates that the Cromarty Firth is the best location to capitalise on the significant opportunities stemming from Scotland's future offshore wind market due to its existing port and laydown facilities, capacity and feasibility for expansion, and proximity to future development sites.

It comes after an earlier Crown Estate Scotland report published last year stated that port facilities at Invergordon and Nigg would be vital in helping to support a major expansion in the nation's offshore wind industry – which will be pivotal for Scotland in meeting its net-zero targets by 2045.

In particular the report highlights the Cromarty Firth's "long-term potential" to support the construction and deployment phases of future Scottish offshore development zones, including the latest ScotWind Leasing round, the majority of which are on its doorstep. Such activity would create major

supply chain and employment opportunities locally, while allowing Scotland to compete with existing UK and European facilities.

Bob Buskie, Chief Executive of the Port of Cromarty Firth, said: "This report is great news for the Cromarty Firth and the Highlands. Scotland is on the cusp of a green energy revolution and with our leading port facilities, there is nowhere in the country better placed to take advantage of this seismic shift in energy generation.

"This has been built on a track record of success within the offshore energy industry stretching back more than 40 years. During that period, the Port has worked hard to develop a world-class supply chain and a highly skilled workforce. Coupled with that, the Port has recently invested more than £50 million in the facilities at Invergordon, which have played an integral role in the Beatrice, Moray East and Kincardine offshore wind developments.

"Our facilities include significant open laydown capacity, deep-water berths and sheltered anchorages, suitable for accommodating the largest offshore wind components, such as turbine blades, tower sections and foundations, as well as the biggest offshore installation and support vessels."



MEMBERS' NEWS

World's Strongest Man Tom Stoltman (right) and Martin MacLeod celebrate ILM Highland's environmental and social achievements over the last 12 months.



01 ILM Highland
Highland social enterprise and charity ILM Highland showed a display of strength when World's Strongest Man Tom Stoltman joined in a celebration of the organisation's environmental and social impact.

ILM Highland has processed an impressive 2,054 tons of waste electrical items in the last 12 months, ensuring they are disposed of responsibly and avoid ending up in landfill. Stoltman, a passionate supporter of local businesses, dropped by to celebrate the achievement.

The organisation was able to salvage and refurbish almost 500 items throughout the year, which were then sold in its electrical retail shop in Alness and online. As well as extending the life of appliances and providing high quality, affordable electricals to the local community, each sale funds ILM Highland's charitable home improvement services which support vulnerable people to be at home.

Highland resident Stoltman, the first Scot to lift the World's Strongest Man trophy, said: "It's been really inspiring to visit ILM Highland and learn about everything they do. As a local, I've been a customer before but didn't realise how much impact the business has on the area. Their work in our community and for the environment is incredible. I would encourage everyone to shop local and support businesses like ILM Highland that are making a real difference in the Highlands."

ILM Highland's waste electrical recycling directly funds its charitable home improvement services, which assist older people, veterans and people living with disabilities in the Highlands to stay at home.

02 Pathfinder
The next Pathfinder Accelerator cohort will begin on January 14th and applications are now open! Pathfinder Accelerator is a fully funded 6-month

programme designed to help life sciences, healthcare, engineering or technology businesses in the Highlands that are ready to launch their next business idea, product or service. With expert trainers on hand to guide you through workshops, group activities and tailored 1-2-1 mentoring sessions, you'll be in the best position to evaluate your ideas, make decisions and take actions for your business. You will also have access to a network of investors, business experts and peers to offer support and advice.

If you are interested in finding out more you can book onto one of their interactive taster sessions to get a sneak peak of what the programme will

look like on Wednesday 6th October or Wednesday 10th November. To discuss anything else you can get in touch with them at pathfinder@skillfluence.co.uk.

Pathfinder Accelerator is funded through Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal – a joint initiative supported by £315m investment from the UK and Scottish governments, The Highland Council, HIE and University of the Highlands and Islands. This programme also receives financial support from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) through the Innovation strategic intervention.

MEMBERS' NEWS

03

Converged/Caley Thistle

Inverness Caledonian Thistle FC (ICTFC) has signed up Scottish IT and cybersecurity company Converged Communication Solutions as its first IT partner. The SPFL Championship side has joined forces with Converged, which has offices in Aberdeen and Inverness, to upgrade its IT systems and invest in technology that will improve digital engagement with fans.

Since last autumn, Converged has supported ICTFC's investment in new laptops and other computer hardware at the Caledonian Stadium. The independent IT firm has also managed the club's transition to Office 365, installed new data back-up systems and firewall solutions, and controlled the migration and management of the club's data to secure cloud-based systems.

In the longer-term, Converged will assist ICTFC by providing ongoing IT support and desktop device management, servicing of onsite infrastructure, software licencing and maintaining effective cybersecurity measures. The partnership will also see Converged deliver cybersecurity training sessions to ICTFC staff and players. These will heighten awareness of different types of cyber threats and demonstrate the steps individuals can take to better protect themselves and their employer when online. Scot Gardiner, ICTFC Chief Executive, said: "We have been very impressed with the seamless installation of

the new systems by Converged and the ease with which staff have transitioned over to them. This is very much an investment for the future. It ensures the club has robust infrastructure and hardware in place as we embrace further digitalisation to enrich how we engage and communicate with Caley Jags around the world."

04

The Palace Hotel

The 110 bedroom Best Western Inverness

Palace Hotel & Spa is delighted to have recently been awarded 4 Stars by the AA. Known for its warm welcome, amazing location and brilliant staff, it is the only central hotel to have a luxury leisure club and swimming pool.

General Manager Mark Scobbie said: "I am extremely proud of the Hotel team who have adapted well these last few months, maintaining a superb standard of guest service throughout this challenging period. It's been a fantastic

journey developing the hotel with the team over the years, conquering many challenges on the way, so for the teams' efforts now to be recognised by the AA is absolutely fantastic."

The family owned and run hotel, who have always believed in reinvesting, began a £2.5million upgrade programme between 2018-2020, when they opened



The Palace Hotel team celebrate getting their new 4 Star status.

Andy McKay, General Manager, Converged Communication Solutions and Keith Haggart, ICTFC's Commercial Director



03

MEMBERS' NEWS

the new Brasserie, Bar & Reception spaces. The exciting programme of upgrades has continued at pace during 2020, refurbishing their world class leisure club and pool, luxury guest rooms and castle view rooms using local tradespeople and materials wherever possible.

Managing Director Tracey Wilding commented: "As a family run hotel, we always want to keep that warm welcoming feeling, whilst always striving to give our guests luxury and style in their stay. As a team we are always innovating, and a pandemic won't stop us doing just that. We have more plans for the hotel and are looking forward to developing our guest experience throughout 2021."

05

Brodies

UK and leading Scottish law firm, Brodies LLP, has reported a year of continued progress for the 12 months to 30 April 2021. The firm, which opened its Highlands office in 2018, reported revenue of £82.5m, up from £82m in the previous year, with operating profit increasing from £38.5m to £39.0m. Cash balances also grew to £30.7m from £25.4m.

The firm credits its continued progress on the resilience of its clients and market leading instructions across its key practice areas of banking and finance, corporate and commercial, litigation, personal and family and real estate. Investments continued to be made during

the year. The firm added nine new partners bringing the partnership to 113 and total headcount grew from 733 to 748. Brodies managing partner, Nick Scott, said: "We begin the new financial year confident in the judgements made about our firm's priorities in the 2020/21 year and humbled by the contributions of our colleagues and the trust our clients placed in our firm."

06

Highland News and Media

The north's leading business magazine has announced a new initiative in support of its chosen charity of the year.

Executive Magazine and Highland News & Media are organising a networking

event in Inverness on 23rd September to raise funds for Macmillan Cancer Support.

To celebrate Macmillan's flagship event, World's Biggest Coffee Morning, Executive Magazine has teamed up with Kings Golf Club & Inverness Coffee Roasting Company to arrange this networking event with a difference. Businesses

are invited to come along to meet up with connections and make new ones, whilst enjoying a coffee tasting experience hosted by Heather and Kevin from Inverness Coffee Roasting Company along with cakes made by the team at Kings Golf Club.

Senior Sales Executive at Highland News & Media, Darrel Paterson, said: "Macmillan give people with cancer everything they've got. If you're diagnosed, your worries are their worries. They are doing whatever it takes. But without your help, they can't support everyone who needs them. We're delighted to be organising this event and hope people will join us in raising as much as we can for the charity. We are asking for a donation of £10 per person, with all funds being donated to Macmillan Cancer Support."

MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT

05



Brodies Managing Partner Nick Scott



movers &shakers

Yellow Cherry

Yellow Cherry are delighted to announce four new postings. Daniel Cooling has joined the team as Business Development Manager. Happiest when making systems processes, and end results better for colleagues and customers, his creative and analytical personality is perfectly placed for making everyone's experience with Yellow Cherry that much smoother. Jason Cracknell originally came to Yellow Cherry on a placement through Barnardo's. Impressed by his work ethic, Jason was invited on board to work full time as a Digital Apprentice. On a daily basis, he trains in several areas including logo, website, brochure design and animation. After joining the Yellow Cherries as a Marketing Assistant in October 2020, Natalie Peteranna has recently been promoted to an Account Executive role. Equipped with a Film & Media degree and background in digital marketing, she's always ready to adapt to her evolving diary. As a member of the project management team, Natalie is responsible for keeping projects moving with clear liaison between clients, developers and designers. Russell Williams has joined their team as a Digital Developer. With a real passion for coding and design, Russell sought out and completed the software developer course at Code Clan's Edinburgh base. Following this, Russell has worked on various personal and freelance projects, while continuing to experiment with new ideas in his spare time.



The Apprentice Store

The Apprentice Store has welcomed three new starts to the team - Ryan Geldart, Dave Cawthorn, and Laura Kirk. Ryan has joined as a Web Development Apprentice, Dave as an Office 365 and Power Platform Mentor and Laura as a Digital Marketing Apprentice. All three are delighted to be working with The Apprentice Store. In a busy few months, The Apprentice Store has grown in numbers, prompting a move to a new office. 2021 looks set to continue as a successful year for this social enterprise as the team continues to serve clients in the Highlands and beyond.



Laura Kirk and Dave Cawthorn



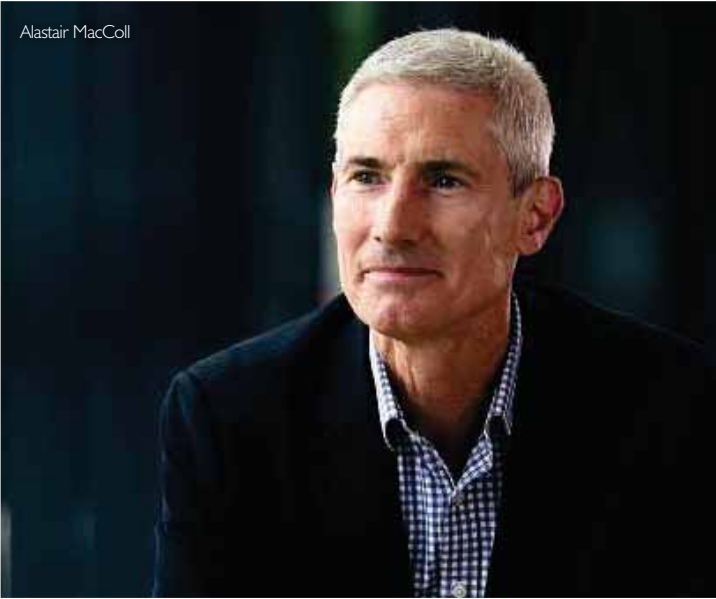
Marsh Commercial

Marsh Commercial are pleased to announce that Jennifer Clark has joined their Inverness team as an Account Manager in the Personal Lines department. Jennifer moved to the area from London in 2019 having spent the majority of her career with the Metropolitan Police working in Crime Scene Examination. Jennifer commented: "Moving to the Highlands has been one of the best things I have ever done. I very much look forward to this new opportunity with Marsh Commercial and learning a whole new career in the insurance industry." Since the beginning of 2021, Jennifer becomes the eighth new recruit for Marsh Commercial Inverness.

Jennifer Clark



Alastair MacColl



UHI

The University of the Highlands and Islands is pleased to announce three new appointments. Experienced university governor and business leader, Alastair MacColl, is joining the university as the new chair of court. Alastair, who lives, works and has deep roots in the Highlands, is currently chairman and pro chancellor of Teesside University. He also chairs UMI, a national business solutions group, which he established as chief executive officer in 2007. He replaces Garry Coutts who is standing down after six years of service to the university as rector and a further seven years as chair of court. Professor Brian Williams will be joining the university as head of Health, Social Care and Life Sciences in November. Originally from Lancaster, Professor Williams is currently head of Health and Social Care Sciences at Edinburgh Napier University. During his 30-year career, he has built up experience in education, research and management across seven UK higher education institutions. Professor Williams will take up his post on 1st November and will be based at the Centre for Health Science in Inverness. Dr Nicola Carey will join the university as Head of the Department of Nursing and Midwifery in the Autumn. Dr Carey is currently reader and lead for the long-term conditions and ageing cluster at the University of Surrey. Before this, she worked in a variety of posts in primary care as a practice nurse, a nurse practitioner and as a nurse educator in the university sector. She also spent two years in the United States undertaking her Master's in public health in community health education. Her areas of research include studies on workforce development, non-medical prescribing and quality improvement. Dr Carey will be based at the Centre for Health Science, Inverness.

Dr Nicola Carey



Brian Williams



Kery Mackinnon

Virtual Learning Academy

Virtual Learning Academy are delighted to announce the appointment of Kery Mackinnon as Financial Controller and Learning Consultant specialising in the fields of Accountancy and Payroll. Kery has

a wealth of experience in Commercial and Practice roles and is a Director at Signature Accounting Solutions, an accountancy practice based in Inverness. Kery commented: "I'm thrilled to be joining Cath and the team at Virtual Learning Academy, their commitment to learning excellence is inspiring and I am excited to take the lead in the organisation's finance function and to assist finance learners in achieving their goals."



Frank Mackenzie

CFN Solutions Ltd

CFN Solutions Ltd are delighted to welcome Frank Mackenzie to the company as Regional Sales Manager based in Inverness. Frank joined the company on the 1st August 2021, and brings to the business over 20 years industry experience, having spent most of that time working for BT and is a highly respected individual, not only in the Highlands, but across Scotland. CFN Solutions managing director Ian MacIntosh said: "Frank joining the business is a bold statement of our growth intentions."

Welcome to **new** members

Telecommunications

CFN Solutions

Contact: Ian MacIntosh

Tel: 01463 515096

Web:

www.cfn-solutions.co.uk

Sport & Recreation

AWAKEN Mind.Body.Glow Ltd

Contact: Courtney MacDonald

Tel: 07470530456

Web: www.awakenmindbodyglow.com

Banking, Finance & Insurance

BGF

Contact: Sarah Doran

Tel: 01224 546522

Web: www.bgf.co.uk

Inverness Chamber of Commerce

Connecting Supporting Representing

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