



MEET OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

inbusiness

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The magazine for Inverness Chamber of Commerce



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STRATEGIC INPUT PROVIDED BY OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andrew Stott
Board President



by Stewart Nicol,
Chief Executive,
Inverness Chamber
of Commerce

The Inverness Chamber of Commerce vision is, 'Dedicated to actively connecting and representing businesses across the Highlands to support their growth.' We benefit all of our member businesses by ensuring all our activities are focused on Connecting – to develop business relationships, Supporting – to help grow Highland businesses, and Representing – giving a voice to our region's businesses. Our vision and strategic objectives were crystallised as we developed our current four-year strategy, which will take us to the end of 2023. This current strategy, in addition to setting out our business objectives for the period, defines our organisational values of trust, integrity and commitment.

All of this work has been driven by our Board of Directors, who are comprised of business leaders from across our member organisations and are elected by our members. Their responsibility is to oversee the strategic direction of our business in addition to discharging their fiduciary responsibilities. Our Chief Executive, Stewart Nicol, as the only Executive Director, is supported by nine Non-Executive Directors, who serve an initial three-year term of office, which can be extended by a second three-year term. A President is elected from the Board, who is supported by a Vice-President, both of whom serve for an additional two-year term. Elections to the Board are made annually at each AGM and we regularly hold ballots, when there are more candidates than vacancies.

In seeking to have an active and engaged Board of Directors, we always try to ensure a good gender balance with Directors coming from across our range of business sectors and territory. It is also important that we have representation from all sizes of member businesses. As we introduce you to our Board of Directors, we're sure you'll agree we have achieved that with our current Board.

Our President is Andrew Stott, who is a Senior Associate at Ledingham Chalmers, specialising in corporate and commercial advice, and transactional work. Andrew believes the Highlands have built a strong reputation for innovation, acumen, and entrepreneurship and that Inverness Chamber has a central role in maintaining that reputation.





Eunice McAdam
Board Vice President

Appointed to the role of Vice-President after last year's AGM, Eunice McAdam, is a partner at Saffery Champness, and has 30 years' experience in providing assurance and advisory services to private companies, entrepreneurs and not-for-profit entities across Scotland and beyond, including those with international interests.

Kathryn Fraser, in her second term of office, is one of our longer serving Directors and is Managing Director of Nevis Environmental. Her responsibility focuses on scientific research and commercial expertise, in addition to leading a multi-disciplinary team.

David Munro is a network specialist with HighNet Telecoms, advising clients on internet connectivity and telephony solutions. He played an integral part in HighNet's decision to put equipment in to the Inverness telephone exchange as a precursor to the current work that is helping transform Inverness into a 'Gigabit City'.

Susannah Endeacott, having been raised in Argyll, returned to the Highlands after spending twenty years in New Zealand. Setting up

her own HR consultancy, Kea HR Partnerships, Susannah strongly believes that the Highlands have great untapped potential in terms of innovation and industry opportunities.

Our directors also include Invernessians, and Marc Wilson is a proud one at that. Marc is Group Marketing Manager at Gael Force Group, supply partner of equipment, technology, and services to the global aquaculture sector.

With significant experience in the hospitality sector, hotelier Ina Davies, manages the new multi-million pound Courtyard by Marriott, Inverness Airport Hotel.

The digital marketing and IT sector is represented by Fergus Weir, who is Managing Director at teclan Ltd, one of Scotland's leading Digital Marketing Agencies.

Our final director to make you aware of needs no introduction to this magazine, as Steve Barron heads up Highland News & Media as Publishing Director.

MEET THE MEMBER

Members tell us what benefits they value



Jack Barrie

FOUNDER

VSHAKE

in | Tell us more about VShake

VShake is a Scottish based small business working on designing a supplement shaker that keeps its promise – it's bought once, and loved forever!

Our mission is simple, to design health and fitness products that help people achieve their dreams and goals by removing common frustrations from everyday products.

With an emphasis on sustainability and limiting our environmental impact, we aim to ensure we always give more than we take and support all those around us.

Our product is now reaching the end of its design phase and will be launched in the upcoming months.

in | What services does VShake offer?

Our flagship product is an innovative supplement shaker that will be available for purchase via the crowdfunding platform Kickstarter later this year. Like most health and fitness enthusiasts, I have often been frustrated by how supplement shakers don't always work. From lumpy shakes, missing parts, and bad smells to leaky parts and ugly designs, they are not what we are looking for to help us enrich our journeys and achieve our goals. By redesigning the conventional shape and functionality, we have been able to remove these issues and create a much superior product.

With a plan to offer full personalisation in the future, VShake's aim is to design health and fitness products that help people achieve their dreams and goals whilst holding a product they love and trust.

in | What makes you most proud/passionate about VShake?

I think for me, my proudest moment so far has been the transition from having an idea in my head, to putting it on paper, to then holding it in my hands. I imagine it's like an author walking into a book shop and seeing their book on the shelf for the first time. Something



that was just a daydream one day, that was born out of me being frustrated over losing a shaker part at work, has now grown into this huge project.

in | Can you tell us a little about your business focus for 2022?

We're working with a marketing strategist, branding freelancer, and some other experts to pull a launch strategy together to ensure our shaker really blows people away when we launch on Kickstarter.

Right now, we're surveying and connecting with our audience to ensure that the final designs are something people would be proud to own and solves real problems people have. In addition to this we are building up our email list and finishing off the final touches to our awesome new website which I can't wait to share with everyone.

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

Being a small business owner can be quite daunting and knowing that I have an amazing network of people to talk to, ask and share advice with is invaluable. It sounds odd, but just knowing that these people have walked, or are walking a similar path to myself is comforting, especially because I'm only 22. There are not many places where you can get this sort of support, and at this early stage it's been really amazing.

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The benefits of **GOING DIGITAL**



From 1 April 2019 Making Tax Digital (MTD) compliance became mandatory for most VAT registered businesses with a taxable turnover above the current threshold (£85,000), and the next phase of MTD for VAT is coming into force on 1 April 2022. We're all used to embracing technology in our personal lives – so what are the benefits of going digital in business?

Making Tax Digital (MTD) is a vital component of the Government's plan to make it easier for individuals and businesses to get their tax right and keep on top of their affairs.

From the first VAT period starting on or after 1 April 2022, all VAT registered businesses which are not already operating MTD will have to:

- Sign-up to MTD
- Keep their records digitally (for VAT purposes only)
- Submit their VAT return information to HMRC through MTD compatible software

Going digital might sound like a time-consuming and expensive process, but for most businesses, the transition is not as complex or costly as it seems. We've been helping businesses of all sizes prepare for MTD for some time now and there are a range of innovative solutions, from cloud accounting packages like

Xero, to Excel solutions that link to bridging software.

The digital software required for MTD makes reporting and submitting information to HMRC a much more straightforward process. Your accounting software can also link with your bank account, and most 'paperwork' can be filed electronically and transferred efficiently into your software, meaning less manual data entry is required. As well as freeing up valuable time, this reduces the risk of processing errors, so your records will be more accurate.

Digital software can also provide you with real-time management information so you can quickly and easily see how your business is performing, measure against your objectives, and produce up-to-date cash flow forecasts and budgets. With this increased visibility of your business performance at your fingertips, and a much-reduced administrative burden, you can focus on growing your business and making it more productive, efficient, and profitable.

If you haven't already switched to a digital accounting software and would like to discuss your options, our Business Advisory team are here to help – visit www.jcca.co.uk for more information.

Laura Carter,
Business Advisory Senior Manager,
Johnston Carmichael

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



THE POINTS-BASED IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

- A SOLUTION TO THE SKILLS SHORTAGE?

The new points-based immigration system was introduced just over a year ago, at around the same time as free movement of EEA and Swiss workers ended. Skills shortages have been severe in certain sectors since then including hospitality, the care sector, food and drink, haulage and others (with COVID-19 worsening the impact for some) – and the Highlands has certainly seen its fair share of those challenges over the past year, as echoed by attendees at our recent Recruiting international workers webinar with Inverness Chamber of Commerce.

The new points-based immigration system may, however, provide a solution for some employers looking to source the skills that they need outside of the UK. The skilled worker visa route allows employers who are registered with the Home Office to sponsor medium and highly skilled workers. When the new points-based system was introduced (1 December 2020) the range of roles suitable for sponsorship approximately doubled. At the same time, the minimum salary requirements were reduced significantly (jobs above £20,480 may in some cases qualify for sponsorship). The process for sponsoring a migrant worker became more streamlined and quicker than it was before and due to some reduced costs for smaller employers, can be less expensive than some expect.

There are other visa solutions for lower paid or lower skilled jobs too. The Youth Mobility visa route enables individuals from certain countries to come to the UK for work, for up to two years. The new Graduate Route visa introduced in 2021 allows international students to spend two or three years working, once their studies are complete. The new British Nationals Overseas visa too, was introduced in 2021 and 88,000 had successfully applied by September 2021. Each of those visas allow work in lower skilled jobs and there are no minimum salary restrictions. So for employers experiencing difficulty recruiting, there may be visa solutions available that are worth considering.

Elaine McIlroy,
Partner at Brodies LLP,
Specialising in immigration law.



A capacity audience will return to the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness for the 2022 Highland Business Dinner

RETURN OF THE HIGHLANDS' LEADING BUSINESS EVENT

After a two year enforced postponement due to the Covid pandemic, Inverness Chamber of Commerce has announced the return of its flagship event in 2022.

The Highland Business Dinner will take place on Friday 20th May at the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness and is set to be attended by over 300 of the region's business leaders.

The announcement follows the success of Inverness Chamber's Highland Business Awards held in November with almost 200 people joining the hybrid event in person.

Paula Nicol, Deputy Chief Executive and Head of Events at Inverness Chamber of Commerce, said: "We're absolutely delighted to be staging the Highland Business Dinner again in 2022. Our recent Highland Business Awards have demonstrated that it is possible to create a really enjoyable event experience while following Covid safe procedures. We look forward to welcoming businesses back to the Highland Business Dinner in May."

Guests attending the highly regarded event can also look forward to hearing from accomplished film and television writer, former barrister and award-winning journalist, Clive Coleman.

Clive co-wrote with Richard Bean *The Duke*, starring Dame Helen Mirren and Jim Broadbent, about the 1961 theft of Goya's portrait of the Duke of Wellington from the National Gallery. Following its world premiere at the 2020 Venice Film Festival it received 5 star reviews in *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *The Mail* and has recently been released in the UK.

For the theatre, Clive with Richard Bean co-wrote *Young Marx*, directed by Nicholas Hytner, which opened at London's Bridge Theatre in 2017.

Clive's TV credits include *Chambers* for R4/BBC1; *The Bill* for ITV; *Dead Ringers* for BBC; *Spitting Image* for ITV and the sitcoms *Spending My Inheritance* and *Hair In The Gate* for R4. Clive won the inaugural Frank Muir award in 1998 for outstanding comedy writing, alongside co-winner Tony Roche.

For ten years from 2010 Clive was the BBC's legal correspondent covering major stories across the BBC's news, a role for which he won multiple journalism awards. He has also presented factual BBC programmes including *Panorama* for BBC1 and *Law In Action* for R4. Clive has been a columnist for *The Times* and written for several other national newspapers.

Paula commented: "It's fantastic to finally be able to welcome Clive as guest speaker at the 2022 Highland Business Dinner. As one of the UK's top comedy writers, Clive's combination of analytical, broadcasting and writing skills have cemented his reputation as a renowned after dinner speaker where the focus is always sharp, intelligent and witty."

The 2022 Highland Business Dinner will be supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise as a Principal Sponsor, DYW Inverness & Central Highland as a Corporate Sponsor and Fibre 1 as an Associate Sponsor.

Tickets cost £115 + VAT per person and may be booked individually or for tables of ten. Booking information can be found at www.inverness-chamber.co.uk/events

Due to the popularity of the event, priority for bookings is given to member organisations of Inverness Chamber of Commerce.



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MEMBERS' NEWS |

01



01

Balfour Beatty

Leading international infrastructure group Balfour Beatty has been awarded the contract for the 1st Stage of the Scottish Prison Service's (SPS) project for the design and construction of the HMP Highland.

This marks a milestone in the SPS' plans to deliver a modern, fit-for-purpose replacement for HMP Inverness. The first new prison in the Scottish Highlands for more than a century, HMP Highland will serve the Highlands, Islands and Moray areas, holding up to 200 offenders in purposely designed accommodation units.

The SPS mission is to transform the lives of people in their care so they can fulfil their potential and become responsible citizens. The new prison represents a step-change in prison design and service delivery for the Highlands and has been developed taking full consideration of Highland Council's Sustainable Design Guide. It is also designed to be community facing; to be physically part of the community and help offenders reintegrate back into the local communities from which they came.

The strategic aims of the prison include delivery of a range of innovative practices in order to stimulate, promote and sustain cultural change within a custodial environment that is more humane, civilised and positively supports offender rehabilitation, reducing recidivism. The prison will build upon the existing community links of HMP Inverness and enable improved service delivery, whilst also improving the experience of visitors to the prison.

02

Mabbett

Glasgow-headquartered Mabbett & Associates Ltd has taken the first step in a strategic growth journey by acquiring Inverness-based planning and design specialist, GH Johnston Building Consultants Ltd. The acquisition of GHJ will enhance the combined group's offering of comprehensive planning and design services bringing together the extensive depth and technical expertise of GHJ and Mabbett's team of planning, design,

environmental, engineering and safety professionals.

Established in 1994, GHJ has gone on to establish itself as the Highlands' leading planning and design consultancy. From its Inverness base, GHJ offers a range of services, including feasibility and site studies, development appraisals, masterplans, appeals and hearings, local development plans, planning applications, community engagement, architectural design, project management and supporting studies.

All GHJ employees will be retained following the acquisition



Seated, L-R Gary Johnston, Director, Planning and Design GHJ and Derek J. McNab, MD Mabbett with GHJ Team and Andy Lee, Jamie Roddie and James Forbes.

02

MEMBERS' NEWS

with Mabbett relocating its Inverness team to GHJ's offices at Stoneyfield Business Park, Inverness. A recruitment drive is planned by GHJ to gear up for the new opportunities brought by joining Mabbett. Speaking about the investment, Mabbett Managing Director, Derek J. McNab, said: "GHJ has a strong profile and long-established reputation for delivering planning and design consultancy services. Their values and attributes make them a great fit for Mabbett and together we are looking to benefit both our clients and ourselves from new opportunities that will be available to the combined entity, with the aim of doubling the size of the business within three years."

03 Morrison Media

Award-winning Scottish PR, public affairs and media training agency Morrison Media has opened a Highland office, as part of a major expansion as it celebrates its 10th anniversary.

The company, headed by former BBC journalist John Morrison, has recruited highly experienced and award-winning journalist Stan Arnaud as its North of Scotland Director. Stan, who is based in Dingwall, joined Morrison Media from The Press and Journal, where he was Highlands and Islands Business Editor for more than five years. He was also previously communications manager with the Global Energy Group and has held various senior communications and public affairs roles in the private and public sectors in the Highlands.

John Morrison said: "The recruitment of Stan Arnaud as our first North of Scotland Director is an exciting new direction for Morrison Media. It's something I have wanted to do for some time because of my connections with the area. Having someone of Stan's calibre based in the north is excellent news for our existing clients and will also help us to develop a stronger presence in the region."

04 Wright, Johnston & MacKenzie

Wright, Johnston & MacKenzie LLP are celebrating 11 years of success in Inverness after opening a base in the city in 2011 with just one solicitor. The law firm has gone from strength to strength and now has a team of 21 and a diverse client base.

Partner Angus MacLeod said: "It's hard to believe that 11 years have passed since we first launched WJM's Inverness office. I grew up in the city and know it can be tricky to find legal experts who really understand the local area and economy in the Highlands, so it's always been important to us to provide a high-quality service to people in the area.

"I believe we have experienced such success since opening because we truly understand the specific needs of clients in the region and have deep-rooted connections in the area. We also have the benefit of being part of a much larger firm with a network of offices and experts across Scotland,

while being firmly embedded within the local community, which is really important."

The team expanded its office to a sizeable 3,000sqft premises in 2019 after a raft of new hires and is now based at The Green House in Beechwood Park North.



Morrison Media
Managing Director
John Morrison



(L-R) Partner and Head of WJM Inverness office
Angus MacLeod with Partner Rod MacLean

movers &shakers

Port of Inverness

The Port of Inverness is delighted to announce the appointment of two new Trustees after an extensive recruitment process.

Alison Wilson is Head of Development and Alumni with the University of the Highlands and Islands, responsible for raising money for and engaging others in the work of the university. Previously, Alison spent 25 years with Highlands and Islands Enterprise in a range of economic development roles, within teams such as skills development and telecommunications, and included leading the agency's Financial and Business Services, Inward Investment and Business Engagement functions.

Gary Cobb is Chief Operating Officer for Highlands and Islands Airports Ltd and has extensive experience in most airport disciplines including operations, engineering, technical, and airport fire service. Prior to HIAL, Gary was Head of Airfield Planning at Gatwick Airport where he was responsible for the airport's innovative northern runway project. He was responsible for the operation of Gatwick's single runway – the biggest in the world. Commenting, Trust Chair, George Macleod said: "I am delighted that both Alison and Gary are joining the Board. Not only are they highly respected but also well-known individuals and I am looking forward to working with them."



Alison Wilson



Gary Cobb

Macleod & MacCallum

Macleod and MacCallum are delighted to announce the promotion of Evelyn Crate, as the new Head of their busy Rural Land Department. Evelyn will be based in their Isle of Skye office, at Somerled Square, in the very heart of Portree. Growing up on her family's small holding, Evelyn has had a passion for rural practices from an early age and is delighted to be able to help and work with the local community where she lives. Evelyn brings a wide breadth of experience and knowledge in Crofting Law and its many complexities, along with her skills in Property, Wills and Powers of Attorney.



Evelyn Crate

Virtual Learning Academy

Yvonne Bruce has recently joined the Virtual Learning Academy as Management Learning Consultant.

Yvonne has a wealth of experience in a variety of HR Management Roles in Scotland and New Zealand including Retail, Aged Care and Security. Yvonne excels in developing training programmes to help staff gain formal qualifications to recognise the skills and knowledge that they use on a daily basis. Before relocating to Scotland Yvonne has won two awards at the recent New Zealand Security Association Awards, 'Security Trainer of the Year 2021' and 'Michael Pepper Award for Outstanding Security Training Initiative 2021'.



Yvonne Bruce



Michael Farry

Michael Farry is the newest member of Team VLA. Michael has taken a leap in his career with a move from Hospitality Management. He has been in the Hospitality Industry for 17 years, working his way from server to General Manager via all departments of Hospitality life.

Michael has always had a passion for Learning & Development and based his own Modern Apprenticeship in Hospitality Management on this. He believes in the Mantra that you raise yourself by raising others. With this, it was a natural move for him to start with us here at VLA, and he is thoroughly enjoying his new career.

sfG Software

Local IT company sfG Software have welcomed a new Senior Software Developer, David Edwards, to their Software Development team. David moved up to the Highlands 3½ years ago from what he describes as a "very flat Cambridgeshire." He brings with him over 30 years of IT industry experience, working for both large corporate companies and small to medium sized businesses. His role is to maintain and develop the sfG MentorNet application, one of the flagship Software-As-A-Service (SAAS) cloud-based applications supplied by sfG Software, which provides functionality to assist organisations manage their mentoring programmes.



David Edwards

Schroders Personal Wealth

Schroders Personal Wealth (SPW) is delighted to announce that Shelley McMillan has been appointed Personal Wealth Adviser in the firm's latest round of promotions. Shelley, who is based in Inverness, has been a strong supporter of the business during her association with the Bank of Scotland, and her new role is testament to SPW's continued effort to expand its presence locally.

SPW is a financial planning joint venture set up by Schroders plc and Lloyds Banking Group. It combines personal relationships and investment expertise to provide an intuitive and transparent service to help customers achieve their financial goals.

Shelley McMillan



Morrison Media

Following a significant rise in business during 2021, Glasgow based Morrison Media are pleased to announce a number of new recruits and promotions within the company.

Highly experienced and award-winning journalist Stan Arnaud will be the company's first North of Scotland Director. Stan joined Morrison Media from The Press and Journal, where he was Highlands and Islands Business Editor for more than five years. Last month, at the Highlands and Islands Press ball and Media Awards, he was named Highland Business Journalist of the Year for the second time, for his work at the P&J.

Stan commented: "I am excited to become Morrison Media's first ever North of Scotland Director as the company enters its second decade. As a business journalist, Morrison Media was a company that I noticed always delivered excellent content for its clients, and I look forward to helping them expand and grow in the north."

Another major appointment saw former Press Association Scotland editor Victoria Mitchell join as Account Director. Victoria led the team at PA Media for more than 10 years and was responsible for developing its successful multi-media team. She previously worked as a reporter at the Daily Record, Sunday Mail, and The Herald.

Eachainn Miller has joined the company as an Account Executive. Eachainn graduated from the University of Stirling in 2020 with a first class honours degree in journalism, and previously worked as a Communications Officer for Comhairle nan Eilean Siar.

Meanwhile, Elaine Fee has been promoted to the role of Senior Account Director. Elaine, an award-winning communications professional who has been at Morrison Media for six years, will lead the business's PR team. Craig Ritchie, who joined Morrison Media last year, has also been promoted to the role of Senior Account Executive.

Managing Director John Morrison commented: "I would like to welcome Victoria and Eachainn on board. Victoria's knowledge and experience is a great asset for our clients, and Eachainn is a highly talented young communications professional with a very bright future ahead of him."

"Elaine and Craig both richly deserve their promotions. Elaine has been a stalwart over the last two years helping to keep everyone on track during the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to lead our expanded PR team. Craig, who joined us in lockdown last year, has been an excellent addition to the team. Both are highly valued by our clients."



Victoria Mitchell



Evelyn Crate



Stan Arnaud



Craig Ritchie



Eachainn Miller

Welcome to **new** members

Construction

Balfour Beatty

Tel: 0800 121 4444

Web: www.balfourbeatty.com

Financial Services

Schroders Personal Wealth

Tel: 07584594306

Web: www.spw.com

PR / Professional Services

Morrison Media

Tel: 07875377419

Web: www.morrison-media.co.uk

Tourism

Sonos Hospitality

Tel: 01471 833202

Web: www.skyehotel.co.uk

Inverness Chamber of Commerce

Connecting Supporting Representing

To find out how we can help you achieve your business goals, email membership@inverness-chamber.co.uk

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Inverness Chamber Executive Partners give extra support to enable the Chamber to play a full part in the economic development of the area. If you are interested in becoming an Executive Partner, please contact Clare Armstrong on 07563 381637.

To find out more about our **Executive Partner Packages** call **Inverness Chamber of Commerce** on **07563381637** or visit **www.inverness-chamber.co.uk**