

Opportunity
Cromarty
Firth
a united port

TRANSFORMING THE HIGHLAND ECONOMY AND **DELIVERING** **NATIONAL ENERGY SECURITY**

inbusiness

June 2022

The magazine for Inverness Chamber of Commerce



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TRULY ONCE IN A LIFETIME

OPPORTUNITY FOR HIGHLAND ECONOMY



by Stewart Nicol,
Chief Executive,
Inverness Chamber
of Commerce

I'm delighted that Inverness Chamber of Commerce has joined Opportunity Cromarty Firth (OCF), the dynamic partnership of private, public and academic sector bodies committed to ensuring that the Cromarty Firth becomes a Scottish Green Freeport. In doing so, we give our full backing to the bid to create a Scottish Green Freeport in the heart of the Highlands. Given the absolutely massive opportunity this Green Freeport Bid represents, it is appropriate we play our role in the consortium, and it is pleasing to note that so many Inverness Chamber of Commerce member organisations are consortium members, many of whom have already been working as part of the consortium for around two years.

OCF believes a Green Freeport centred on the Firth and City of Inverness will maximise local and Scotland-wide benefits from a pipeline of renewable energy projects and place the Highlands at the heart of the nation's drive towards net-zero. Our region already hosts a number of leading supply chain companies as well as a locally skilled workforce with essential engineering experience. This is coupled with existing first-class port infrastructure and manufacturing facilities in the Cromarty Firth.



It is anticipated that a Cromarty Firth Green Freeport will stimulate further economic activity and attract inward investment in innovative renewable energy technologies, equipping local people and businesses with skills and technologies to bring transformational regeneration to the Highlands with benefits across the country. Working closely with other Highland Chambers of Commerce, we believe we are uniquely placed to ensure Highland-based SMEs benefit fully from the opportunities that will be realised from a successful bid.

I'm absolutely convinced, this is a massive opportunity for our region. More than that, I fundamentally believe there is no other location in the entire nation better positioned to become a Green Freeport.

An Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport would undoubtedly spark an employment boom that would create tens of thousands of jobs in the Highlands, Scotland and the UK over a decade. All of the consortium members are clear, our successful bid would "revolutionise" the Highland economy and stimulate major new manufacturing activity elsewhere in Scotland and the UK. We believe the Cromarty Firth is the only location in Scotland able to deliver the ambitions set out in the UK Government's Energy Security Strategy, compete with established facilities abroad and create the associated well-paid jobs and business opportunities locally and nationally.

Earlier this year, Crown Estate Scotland's ScotWind leasing round announcement signalled £26billion investment in new offshore windfarms, the majority of which are on the doorstep of the Cromarty Firth, and underpin a 50-70-year pipeline of projects for our area. A growing number of leading international developers, who have secured ScotWind seabed leases, are voicing their support for the Highland Green Freeport bid, arguing they were convinced it would build a pipeline of jobs for the benefit of the whole of Scotland and the rest of the UK.

This ambitious bid is not just about realising the full renewable energy potential from offshore wind. The focus on early deployment of offshore wind resources is simultaneously driving development of the green hydrogen economy. And again, our region has the potential to be at the heart of large-scale developments and export opportunities.

The port facilities on the Cromarty Firth have supported more offshore wind projects than any other Scottish ports. In addition, the Port of Nigg is currently delivering the storage and marshalling work for Scotland's largest and the world's deepest fixed-bottom offshore wind farm, Seagreen. The £2.5billion 588MW Beatrice and £2.6bn IGW Moray East offshore windfarms were both constructed and marshalled from the Firth, which has already supported two floating windfarms.

Everyone involved in OCF are calling on the UK and Scottish governments to choose the Cromarty firth as one of the locations for Green Freeport status.



HIGHLAND BUSINESS WEEK

26-30 SEPT

HIGHLAND
SPOTLIGHT

HIGHLAND
BUSINESS
AWARDS

Highland Business Week is set to make a return in September 2022 and will feature an exciting series of events including networking opportunities and seminars running from Monday 26th September through to Friday 30th. The event, organised by Inverness Chamber of Commerce, will be the eighth of its kind and will host the well established Highland Spotlight business exhibition on Tuesday 27th and close with the Highland Business Awards lunch on the Friday. The Highland Business Week provides Highland companies with excellent opportunities to make new business connections and celebrate their achievements.

For further details visit
www.inverness-chamber.co.uk/events/



MEET THE MEMBER

Members tell us what benefits they value

Jay Gallagher

REGIONAL HIRE MANAGER

PORTAKABIN

in | Tell us more about Portakabin?

Portakabin is an industry leading modular and offsite construction specialist operating across ten European territories; England, Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland, Republic of Ireland, France, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

We have more than 1,750 employees operating across 100+ sites, and we offer a wide range of building solutions and services to meet the needs of an ever increasing diverse customer base – from the most challenging temporary buildings to landmark permanent schemes.

in | What services does Portakabin offer?

We provide high quality modular buildings from complex architectural design right through to custom-made interior fittings on completion. Portakabin buildings can be used for almost every application and site for any sized organisation in any sector.

We provide the best in quality coupled with bespoke design, available to buy or hire, as well as refurbished and site accommodation solutions.

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

It may sound cliché, but it's the people we work with that

make me proud to work for Portakabin. As a business we are passionate, totally customer focused and pride ourselves in delivering exactly what the customer needs.

A project that has made me particularly proud is work we did with The Macallan Distillery. The distillery visitor centre, located on the stunning Easter Elchies estate, needed additional space to meet global demand of the product. We completed the project on time and to budget in six short weeks, and ensured we met the clients' requirements precisely.

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

Our focus is to continue to build strong relationships with local businesses.

The future is very exciting in the renewable energy sector, and we are keen to get involved and play our part in a greener future.

As a company, we are committed to achieving net zero before 2040. You can read more about our journey by visiting www.portakabin.com/netzero

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

Networking events have been incredibly valuable to us. We love to meet and connect with other local businesses. It's a really great way of finding out what's going on in the area, and how we can all come together to support and celebrate Inverness and the wonderful businesses that are based here.

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MEET THE MEMBER

Members tell us what benefits they value

Ryan Mckenna, Michael Hendry
and Laura Kirk

WEB DEVELOPMENT

THE APPRENTICE STORE

in | Tell us more about The Apprentice Store?

Founded in 2016, The Apprentice Store is an IT service provider in Inverness supporting businesses in the Highlands and beyond. The Apprentice Store works primarily with SMEs by providing them access to quality IT services. We also offer sustainable employment to young people and give them a way into the IT industry.

The Apprentice Store recently became the only IT provider in Scotland to be Platinum accredited by Investors in Young People (IYP) and only the 6th organisation in Scotland to achieve this recognition. The business has also made all five commitments and signed the Young Person's Guarantee through Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).

The IT sector is a difficult industry to get a footing into, especially for those who may not have had an academic background in computer science, which is why we have supported 17 apprenticeships over 6 years allowing those people to be able to start in the IT sector. The Apprentice Store is proud to have allowed people of all paths entry into the industry and today we have 12 staff members.

in | What services does The Apprentice Store offer?

We offer services from business remote support to development. Our web development and design services are all focused on WordPress as we believe this offers the best mix of quality and affordability for our clients. Our web development projects focus on giving our clients an amazing final product where they have full control and ownership of the website. The design aspects of these projects are carried out by one of our apprentices. The web development team also provide SEO reviews, optimisation of content and reports for client websites.

Our support team handle a wide range of daily tasks from password resets to investigating email breaches and putting fixes and improvements in place to improve their cyber security. Our support team also work to provide our clients with Office 365 licenses, aid with SharePoint, and helpful solutions to problems using Dynamics. This

is just a taster of what our support team can do, to find out more visit our website: www.theapprenticestore.co.uk.

A unique attribute about our team and the way we work, is that we don't only support our clients, but also impart our knowledge to them, allowing them to grow their IT skills.

in | What makes you most proud/passionate about The Apprentice Store?

The Apprentice Store is an amazing organisation which provides young people with opportunities that they may not have otherwise had.

When working on a client's systems/websites there is level of care that needs to be upheld, which can be daunting for a young person. However, we believe in our apprentices which allows them to learn from their mistakes in a safe and supportive environment.

Managing Director David Massey not only helps our apprentices develop in a work capacity but also personally, ensuring that their development is in no way limited. This is something that all of the team at the Apprentice Store are passionate about.

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

Like many businesses there is still some uncertainty over the next 12 months, but we have plans to increase our workforce as more businesses look to access our quality services and achieve efficiency through automation and deeper technology engagement.

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

The main benefit we value is the networking events so it is great to see them making a return.





THE UNSUNG HEROES OF THE WHISKY INDUSTRY

Whisky is one of Scotland's most popular exports. Generating £5.5 billion towards the nation's economy, it is unsurprising that a significant number of new distilleries are opening on a regular basis nowadays, adding to the 130 already in existence across the country.

This surge in distillery ownership is great news for Scotland's tourism and food and drink sectors, but this well-regulated industry can be a minefield without the correct legal advice.

I have been involved in an array of whisky projects of varying sizes, and recognise how important it is to seek legal counsel throughout the process.

From the moment the decision is made to start a distillery, there are several legal factors to consider such as planning, HMRC regulations, health and safety, and crucially - what defines a whisky.

Starting any kind of business is a daunting process and the regulations that come with whisky distilling in Scotland, as well as the three-years-and-a-day wait before being able to sell the product as whisky, makes starting a distillery all the more complex and bound in red tape.

Ensuring a steady cash flow is also crucial and being able to keep the stills going in the long-term is an expensive process.

This is why many distilleries turn to gin production, visitor centres and blends using mature spirit from elsewhere to provide a steady income while the new spirit is maturing.

My colleagues and I have worked with clients in the distilling sector for many years and have helped them navigate a wide variety of legal challenges.

Clients who are genuinely looking to create whisky for the next generation of dram enthusiasts tend to have a fresh approach and they are keen to ensure the business will survive for generations to come.

It's a fascinating industry, and I'd urge anyone looking to get into this type of work to consider the importance of seeking legal advice in the early stages of a project.

**Angus Macleod,
Partner and head of Wright,
Johnston & Mackenzie LLP's
Inverness office**



GETTING BACK TO BUSINESS AT THE HIGHLAND BUSINESS DINNER 2022

Inverness Chamber of Commerce has celebrated the return of its flagship event, the Highland Business Dinner. Friday 20th May saw the Highland business community dust off their best black-tie attire and make their way to The Drumossie Hotel for the first Highland Business Dinner since 2019.

The audience heard from Master of Ceremonies, Liam Christie, who summarised the many news topics of the past three years in a satirical poem. Andrew Stott, Inverness Chamber President and Partner at city law firm Ledingham Chalmers, addressed the key issues facing local businesses including staff shortages across all sectors and the uncertainty around the completion of the A9 dualling. This year's guest speaker was accomplished film and television writer, former barrister and award-winning journalist, Clive Coleman, who gave a wonderfully entertaining talk, drawing on his many experiences in the court room.

The event's chosen charity for 2022 was Culloden based Adopt-A-Child who work with sponsors and donors across the world to provide nutritious food, medical and dental care, pastoral and practical care, and a future for thousands of under-privileged people in Guatemala and Albania. The charity prize draw saw prizes donated from The Drumossie Hotel, Yellow Cherry, Ness Walk, Frank Nicol Farm & Garden Machinery, Redelk Design & Marketing, MonsterFest and Tweed Wealth Management and raised a total of £3,680. This year, Adopt-A-Child will open its 10th centre with medical clinic in the remote mountains of Guatemala and the money raised at the Highland Business Dinner will go directly towards drilling a fresh water well to bring clean water to the area.

Thank you to all who attended the event, the team at The Drumossie Hotel and of course the event sponsors, Highlands and Islands Enterprise, DYW Inverness & Central Highland, Fibre I Ltd and The Tomatin Distillery Co Ltd.



Inverness Chamber President Andrew Stott, Adopt-A-Child UK&I National Coordinator Janis Wilby and Inverness Chamber Chief Executive Stewart Nicol



Managing Director David Massey receiving the IYP Platinum Accreditation from MSP Fergus Ewing

01

The Apprentice Store

Congratulations to The Apprentice Store who have achieved "Investors In Young People" Platinum accreditation. They are the first Scottish organisation from the IT sector, and only the sixth organisation in Scotland, to be awarded Platinum. It is thanks to the continued dedication from the team, the management team and the board that has allowed the company to rise from Gold to Platinum. Young people have so much to offer and are at the heart of The Apprentice Store which is demonstrated by the support and commitment the organisation provides.

The Apprentice Store are also celebrating their 2022 Supporters Awards. These awards are used to demonstrate the social impact of businesses choosing their IT services and to highlight the contribution of the businesses who have continued to support The Apprentice Store. This year 92 businesses have received awards, which is up by 30 businesses from last year, with a Platinum award going to Cairn Consulting for a second year running. The Apprentice Store would like to thank all 92 businesses and they look forward to celebrating the 2023 Supporters Awards with you next year.

To top off the good news, Matthew Dickinson has recently celebrated his 5 year work anniversary with The Apprentice Store, which is a major milestone for the young specialist.

02

Brodies

UK and leading Scottish law firm Brodies LLP has announced the relocation of its Highlands office to Inverness, following strong client activity across the region.

Brodies will move to Clava House at Cradlehall Business Park from its previous premises in Dingwall Business Park, which opened in 2017. The firm will occupy the building alongside Johnston Carmichael.

Brodies also confirms the promotion of Highlands-based

family and child law specialist Sarah Lilley to Partner. Having joined the firm in 2020, Sarah has over 14 years' experience in family and child law, ten of which have been spent working with clients in and around Inverness. She is also the only lawyer north of Aberdeen to hold three accreditations from the Law Society of Scotland in child law, family law and family mediation.

Nick Scott, Brodies' Managing Partner, said: "Moving our Highlands office to Inverness follows strong client activity across the region and continued growth of our locally-based team. Our new premises are modern and bright, and together with our team of lawyers based across the mainland, Skye, Shetland and Orkney, will enable us to continue supporting clients and their instructions across the length and breadth of the Highlands and Islands, wherever they are located."



Brodie LLP Partner Sarah Lilley

02



03

Yulia and her baby girl

03

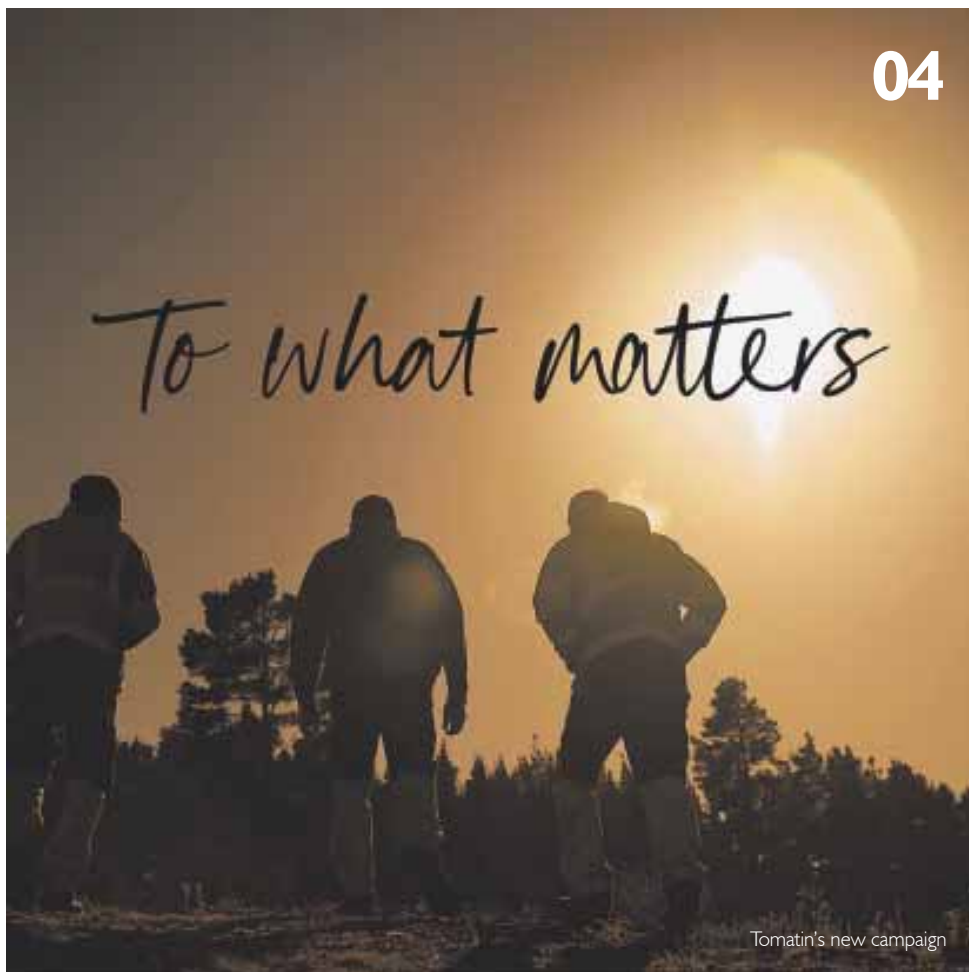
Blythswood

Blythswood's partners in Ukraine are regularly providing food and transport for hundreds of people. Recently they helped Yulia who gave birth in the basement of a maternity hospital in Kyiv on 25th February. After a prolonged labour her daughter was eventually delivered by caesarean section. Support from Blythswood is helping to make sure that Yulia receives the nutrition she needs to breastfeed the baby and the organisation has also provided clothes for both mother and child, as they left with nothing.

Their partner, Tanya, is very much involved on the ground in Ukraine. In the last 8 years Tanya has had to move from her home and work in the Crimea and set up similar work in Kyiv. Her main drive is to be able to move people (including children) out of the city of Kyiv to safer places. She is also involved in helping orphanages with their present needs.

Yulia's husband and 18 month old daughter are staying in a town surrounded by Russian troops, where evacuation is impossible, and they have to hide in basements for their survival.

This is just an example of the work Blythswood are supporting through trusted partners in Ukraine and also in Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova and Romania in helping to provide support for refugees. The response to their appeal has been overwhelming but they need more. For more information or to make a donation please visit <https://blythswood.org/donate-to-ukraine-appeal/>



04

Tomatin

Tomatin, one of Scotland's most awarded whiskies, has recently launched a new campaign designed to remind people about the important things in life. 'To What Matters' is the latest chapter in the brand's evolution; a positive call to arms that represents the spiritual DNA of Tomatin - a human belief in what's truly important in life. The significant moments.

The new brand proposition, To What Matters, marks an important milestone for the whisky, as it approaches its 125th anniversary. Speaking about its unveiling, Jennifer Masson, Tomatin's Head of Brand, said: "We have very ambitious growth plans for Tomatin Single Malt, building on the rapid success we've had in recent years, and we now feel like the brand is in the strongest position to meet these goals head on.

"In every area of the business, working at Tomatin is more than just a job. It's a way of life. Authenticity lies at the heart of 'To What Matters' and we couldn't be prouder of what it stands for. We share true Highland warmth in our stories, our welcome, and of course, our whiskies, and if ever the world needed a drop of Highland warmth, it is now."



05

The Oxygen Works

An exciting opportunity to join the board of The Oxygen Works has arisen. The Oxygen Works is a local charity which provides oxygen therapy and personalised support treatments to people living in the Scottish Highlands and Islands with a wide range of medical conditions to improve their health and wellbeing.

The Board plays a vital role in the management and development of the organisation. They have responsibility for the overall running of the business and provide line management to the senior business leaders. This specific Trustee role will support the organisation to build strategic thinking and planning for future fundraising and marketing activity.

For the successful candidate, this is a wonderful chance to build on The Oxygen Works' existing successes. A commitment to empowering people to live healthy and fulfilled lives within the circumstances they experience is essential and they welcome applications from candidates from diverse backgrounds who believe they have the skills, experience and enthusiasm to deliver this fundamental role. Further details on the vacancy can be found on their website, <https://>

theoxygenworks.com/we-are-now-recruiting-board-of-directors/ and the closing date is set for 4th July.

06

Muckle Media

Muckle Media, the creative communications agency, has acquired Taste Communications Scotland in a six-figure deal. Taste Communications was formed 10 years ago and fast established itself as Scotland's first specialist food and drink agency. Its growing reputation has resulted in long term relationships with top luxury brands including Gleneagles, Fairmont St Andrews, Prestonfield and The Three Chimneys.

The strategic growth move by Muckle Media will see the Taste Communications brand retained and the existing team move over to form part of Muckle Media's wider group of companies.

Muckle Media, Scotland's first and only B-Corp PR agency, will integrate with Taste Communications over a twelve-month period from 1st April, with Taste founder Stephen Jardine becoming a non-executive Director.

Nathalie Agnew, Managing Director of Muckle Media said: "I've long admired the work of Stephen and the Taste Communications team and the fantastic brands they work with. This deal builds upon our existing experience helping food, drink and hospitality brands to grow through strategic, creative communications, bolstering our team and client list.

"We look forward to continuing to build upon Taste Communications' excellent reputation as a specialist food, drink and hospitality specialist agency, bringing our extensive team's skillset to add value to Taste Communications' fantastic clients."



06

Muckle Media Managing Director Nathalie Agnew and Taste Founder Stephen Jardine

movers &shakers

Macleod & MacCallum

Macleod & MacCallum are delighted to announce the appointment of Tomas Simpson and Aidan Grant as Associates from 1st April, 2022. Tomas and Aidan joined the Firm in 2016 and



Tomas Simpson and Aidan Grant

were enrolled as qualified Solicitors in 2018 after completing a 2 year traineeship. The promotions to Associates are a well-deserved recognition of their contribution to the Firm over the last 4 years.

Morag MacIntosh, Chair of the Board at Macleod & MacCallum said: "Tomas and Aidan have become valuable members of the firm during their time with us as both trainees and qualified solicitors, within our Residential Conveyancing Team. It is particularly pleasing to see 2 new solicitors, both born and raised in the Highlands, continuing to work and serve the communities that they grew up in. The firm has a long and proud history of training young people, giving them solid career opportunities in law and other fields. Tomas and Aidan are in fact following in the footsteps of 6 of our current Directors who began their legal careers as trainee solicitors with Macleod & MacCallum."

Fibre 1

With over 2 years' customer service experience, Tamarrah has joined the team at Inverness Chamber Gold Partner Fibre 1 to take on an exciting, newly created role of Project Support Administrator. Tamarrah will be engaging and supporting customers and channel partners by managing online portal use and analysing software platforms. Tamarrah is eager to learn and develop her skills and knowledge at Fibre 1, she can't wait to see what the future holds, and is enthusiastic to watch the expansion continue and to connect with businesses far and wide.



Tamarrah

Chiene + Tait

Chiene + Tait (C+T) has announced the appointment of Grant Mackay, a leading VAT specialist to its Inverness team. With experience across a number of core sectors including agriculture, landed estates, charities, public sector and owner managed businesses, Grant joins from 'Big Four' firm EY where he spent over two decades advising clients.

Jackie Fraser, Chiene + Tait Partner, said: "Grant's appointment is significant for the firm's VAT Team and our Inverness operation. He brings a wealth of diverse business experience and has developed in depth knowledge from working across many of our core client sectors."



Grant Mackay



Iwona Zimna

Tailormade Moves

Tailormade Moves are delighted to announce two new appointments to their rapidly growing team. Ellie Malim joined the team earlier this year as an administrator in their busy sales team. Ellie said: "The property sector is completely new to me, and I absolutely love it! Helping people find their dream home or achieve a sale on their current property is such a great feeling! I am loving being part of such a fun team, they are amazing and it's no wonder we are consistently the number 1 agent in Inverness."

Iwona Zimna joined in April as a Sales Negotiator and sold a property in her first week! With years of industry experience Iwona is a fabulous addition to the team. Iwona said: "I am so excited to have joined one of the best estate agency firms in Inverness. The volume of properties going under offer so quickly creates such a buzz in the office."



Ellie Malim

ILM Highland

ILM (Highland) in Alness is delighted to appoint Kenny Horsfield to the new role of Head of Operations. Kenny previously headed up their Waste Electrical and Reuse departments, as well as the Electrical Retail Shop. He is now responsible for their charitable Care & Repair and Handyperson services, bringing all departments under an overall Operations lead.



Kenny Horsfield



Martin Bannerman

Johnston Carmichael

Independent accountancy and business advisory firm Johnston Carmichael is shining a spotlight on its newest Inverness Directors, Martin Bannerman and Allison Dalton.

Allison, who joined the firm in 2006, has been based in Inverness since 2015 and leads a portfolio of owner-managed businesses. In 2021, Allison was appointed the firm's Head of Construction & Property, leading a team of experts recognised as market leaders.

Martin joined Johnston Carmichael in 2007 and since then has provided audit, assurance and accounting services across a number of industry sectors. Martin leads statutory audit engagements as well as specialising in the delivery of grant claim certifications and other assurance assignments for clients across the firm.



Allison Dalton



Joanne Mannis

Mercure Inverness

Joanne Mannis has started with Interstate Hotels & Resorts as Sales Manager for Mercure Inverness and Mercure Perth hotels. Joanne has over 20 years' experience in hotels, concentrating on B2B sales and has previously worked with Inverloch Castle, Cromlix and Gleneagles. She is looking forward to meeting members of the Chamber and getting to know how the Mercure Inverness can assist with any accommodation or event. With the exciting developments taking place in and around the city, it is an exciting time to be joining the Mercure Inverness.

Developing the Young Workforce Inverness & Central Highland

DYWICH has welcomed Lauren Macdonald as their new Administrator. She brings with her administration experience from previous posts in various backgrounds such as car sales and green energy suppliers. Lauren is delighted to work and support the school coordinators and in turn help the young people in her local and surrounding area. Hosted by Inverness Chamber of Commerce, DYWICH aim to develop sustainable links between schools, colleges, and employers, working in partnership to help employers shape their future workforce and help better prepare young people for the world of work.



Lauren Macdonald

Welcome to **new** members

Tourism

Mercure Inverness Hotel
Tel: 01463 548 111
Web: www.mercureinverness.co.uk

Media

The Press & Journal
Tel: 01463 272 200
Web: www.pressandjournal.co.uk

Travel

Scottish Canals
Tel: 0141 332 6936
Web: www.scottishcanals.co.uk

Business Services

Scottish Business Resilience Centre
Tel: 01786 447 441
Web: www.sbrcentre.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

Inverness Chamber EXECUTIVE PARTNERS

Inverness Chamber gratefully acknowledges the support of its Executive Partners:

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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.

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