



IT'S ALL HAPPENING IN THE HIGHLANDS

inbusiness

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The magazine for Inverness Chamber of Commerce



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GET INSPIRED THIS HIGHLAND BUSINESS WEEK



by Colin Marr,
Chief Executive,
Inverness Chamber
of Commerce

I think I can still get away with describing myself as the new Chief Executive of Inverness Chamber of Commerce – it's only been three months and I still have a number of firsts to experience.

This is one – writing my first article for inbusiness magazine. And at the end of this month there will be another few firsts for me – Highland Business Week, including Highland Spotlight and the Highland Business Awards.

I had the pleasure of chairing the judging panel for the Highland Business Awards last week. We have a really strong shortlist that represents the great range of businesses that we have in the Highlands. If you made it to the shortlist then please spend the time between now and the awards lunch (29 September at the Kingsmills hotel, if you'd like to join us) telling the world about your achievement. If you didn't make the shortlist please don't feel too down about it. We had a huge number of entries and most of the categories were really hotly contested. If you didn't enter then have a think about next year – being shortlisted is a great accolade and one that can really help demonstrate the quality of your business to potential customers.

The awards lunch itself will be a great occasion. In what now seems like a past life, I've been lucky enough to have been shortlisted three times – and I've experienced both results – so I know what our shortlisted companies are going through – regardless of what way the announcement goes for them.

But the awards lunch is just the culmination of Highland Business Week – there's so much else going on before that.



Highland Spotlight is the biggest business exhibition in the Highlands and is a tremendous place to come and meet other companies, make connections and do business. Our team are always amazed at how much business actually happens on the day, and we know that only scratches the surface of what happens in the following weeks as people start to work with their new connections. If you want to see who's exhibiting just have a look at our website. It's not too late to join them at the Drumossie Hotel on 26 September



We'll also have a young entrepreneurs zone at Spotlight for the first time so you can see what some of our future business leaders and geniuses are up to. And when they're not impressing everyone else in attendance we'll be hosting some workshops to help them develop their businesses.

But Spotlight isn't just an exhibition. There's also a number of seminars happening that day and throughout the week – most of them led by our member companies. I'm guessing that the AI seminar is going to be one of the most popular events. We've all heard about how AI is going to change our working life and make a lot of our current tasks much easier. But how many of us are actually using it? I've started, but not for anything serious yet so I'm looking forward to learning more. Maybe I'll ask AI to write my second inbusiness column for me.

There is also a seminar in how to tell your business story which will really help you market your business to other people. It's the day before Spotlight – so perfect timing. There's an event on TV marketing and another on Digital Twins (yes I know, it's beyond me too – but I hope to learn). And there's networking events for the food and drink sector, a session on planning for invited guests, a business finance session and our own Chamber International Team hosting a session on how to increase your international trade.

The Inverness Chamber exists to help your business grow. We do that through connecting you with other businesses, supporting you with skills and training and representing you when you need it. Highland Business Week is where we do all these things in just a few days. I look forward to seeing you there.

HIGHLAND BUSINESS WEEK

PROGRAMME OF EVENTS

MONDAY 25TH SEPTEMBER

Tell Your Business Story With Confidence

Drumossie Hotel, Inverness
9.30am - 4.00pm

In a crowded marketplace – and in today's rapidly changing world – it's more important than ever that your business stands out. Your story is the key to this. Broadcasting and communication specialists, Nicky Marr and Kate Hooper will take you through 4 key steps to get your business story straight and tell it with confidence.

Unlock The Power Of Mindset

Pentland Hotel, Thurso
12.00 noon – 2.00pm

Whether we realise or not, our mindset shapes everything we think and do, including our business. Join Royal Bank of Scotland in partnership with Caithness Chamber of Commerce for this business builder event, one of a series designed to support and challenge entrepreneurs to develop the right foundations for their business.



TUESDAY 26TH SEPTEMBER

Setting Up For Success

Online
10.00am – 12.00 noon

Whether you are still at idea 'validation' stage and looking to launch soon; just started with some early traction; or are ready to scale, then this event will help you set up for success. Hosted and facilitated by Royal Bank of Scotland, this session will deliver the fundamental building blocks of business; from goal setting and mindset; to testing, validating, pitching, and knowing your numbers.

Highland Spotlight Business To Business Exhibition

Drumossie Hotel, Inverness
10.00am - 4.00pm

The Highlands' only dedicated business to business exhibition showcases the wide range of products and services available in the Highlands, and gives businesses a unique opportunity to make new contacts and find new buyers and suppliers.

HIGHLAND
SPOTLIGHT

HIGHLAND SPOTLIGHT BUSINESS SEMINARS

Expand your knowledge with these free business seminars running alongside Highland Spotlight.

Artificial Intelligence - The Future Is Here. Is Your Business AI Ready?

10.30am – 11.30am

Hosted by tecan, this seminar will take you on a journey from 'What is AI?' right through to the most current applications and demonstrations of this emergent technology, giving you up-to-the-minute guidance on AI, the opportunities and threats, the moral dilemmas, transformative technologies, AI agents and much more, as well as a curated understanding that will add value to your teams and your business.

From Brand To Broadcast - The Power Of TV Advertising On A Budget

12.00 noon – 1.00pm

Think you need to be a big business to advertise on TV? Think you need a big budget? Think again! This session, delivered by Sky AdSmart and Dynam, will give you the tools you need to strengthen your brand, helping you to reach your audiences in a cost-effective way with Sky AdSmart.

WEDNESDAY 27TH SEPTEMBER

Scaling For Success

Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness
10.00am – 12.00 noon

Hosted by Tweed Business Advisory, this event will focus on achieving success through scaling your business and the importance of growth potential. Attendees will gain valuable insights into strategies for growth, overcoming challenges, and maximising your potential. Expand your network, exchange ideas and discover new opportunities to take your business to the next level.

Economist Business Briefing

Glenmoriston Town House Hotel, Inverness
12:00 noon – 2.00pm

Join Royal Bank of Scotland for a business briefing with their Senior Economist, Philip Bartlett. Philip is Senior Economist in the Royal Bank's strategic research team and is passionate about using data and analysis to make sense of the big issues facing the UK economy. Current research topics include a focus on development in the post-pandemic labour market, inflation drivers and the outlook for housing.



THURSDAY 28TH SEPTEMBER

An Introduction To Digital Twins

Life Sciences Innovation Centre, Inverness Campus
11.00am – 3.00pm

Do you want to find out how your product or service will perform? By setting up a digital twin you can create a virtual representation of a product or service that uses real world data to create simulations that can predict how it will perform. Hosted by Highlands and Islands Enterprise, this interactive event, featuring inspiring talks from industry guest speakers and a panel Q&A, will explain what digital twins are, how they work and how they can benefit your business.

Food + Drink TechHUB Networking Event – Overcoming Challenges

Uilebheist Distillery, Ness Bank, Inverness
4.00pm - 6.00pm

Food and Drink TechHUB, in partnership with Uilebheist Distillery and Brewery, is hosting this free networking event for food and drink producers and supply chain businesses in the Highlands to come together to look at dealing with and overcoming challenges in the sector. The event will give attendees the opportunity to hear from businesses that have taken the plunge, doing something differently and out of their comfort zone to grow their enterprise.



FRIDAY 29TH SEPTEMBER

Highland Business Awards

Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness
12.00 noon for 12.15pm



Join us in recognising the valuable contribution that so many businesses and individuals make to the Highland business community, as the winners of the prestigious Highland Business Awards 2023 are announced. This will also be a unique opportunity to hear about the development of the Sutherland Spaceport from Lesley Still, Chief of Spaceport Operations at Orbex.



MEET THE MEMBER

Members tell us what benefits they value



Julia Dall

REGIONAL MENTOR SERVICES LEAD - NORTH
MCR PATHWAYS

in | Tell us more about MCR Pathways?

MCR Pathways is a national, award-winning mentoring programme, which is now funded by the Scottish government. The programme is still relatively new in Highlands, having been established here in June 2021.

in | What services does MCR Pathways offer?

Our vision is for all young people to have equality of education outcomes, career opportunities, and life chances. Our programme carefully matches young people with a mentor to meet for just one hour a week, in school, during term time only, which can make a profound impact on their confidence and future.

in | What makes you most proud/passionate about MCR Pathways?

I'm proud of so much about our programme! How inclusive it is - our youngest mentor is 21, and our oldest is nearly 90 years old! I'm proud that overall, nationally, we currently support 5,000 young people through mentoring and school-based support, and are working towards reaching 15,000. I'm extremely proud that since the programme started in the Highlands, we've inspired 492 local people to register an interest in mentoring, and that we currently have 123 mentor/mentee pairings meeting weekly. I'm proud of our small team, and how hard we all work to make wonderful matches that make a real difference. However, I'm most proud of the fact that so many young people are benefitting locally from what we do - one of our young people (Dingwall, S3), when asked about what mentoring means to him, said that "it's like having a best friend" - what more could we hope for than that?

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

This year, we're not only focusing on nurturing the mentoring relationships we have going at the moment, but also recruiting more mentors to meet the number of young people starting on our programme. We also try to maintain strong links with local businesses to promote work experiences for our young people, and generally to be a positive and active part of the communities in which we're based.

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

The networking events have been incredible - for a charity like ours, it's all about raising awareness of what we do, and so being able to reach such a wealth of useful local contacts in such an organised and productive way has been very helpful for us. We very much appreciate what ICC does for local businesses, and hope to keep attending the events for many years to come.

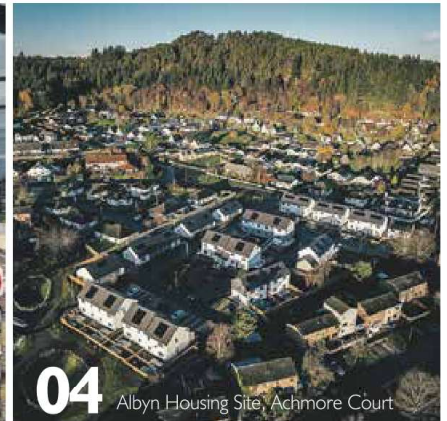




Three of RI Cruden's award-winning apprentices with Director Callum Cruden and Apprentice Manager Greg Matheson



Parklands Pride performers, Venus Guytrap and Miss Lossie Mouth



Albyn Housing Site, Achmore Court

01

RI Cruden

During Scottish Apprenticeship Week, Developing the Young Workforce Inverness and Central Highland caught up with Greg Matheson, Heat Pump Installation Manager and Apprentice Co-ordinator at RI Cruden Ltd, shared with DYW his thoughts on how apprentices can unlock potential in a business and provide a skilled workforce for the future.

He talked about the apprenticeship scheme at RI Cruden Ltd and how they see it as a vital part of their business, allowing them to tailor the workforce to meet the demands and requirements of the future, saving valuable time and money on recruitment drives for years to come. With 11 apprentices ranging from 1st year to 4th year, the business invests heavily in its apprenticeships and offers a wide variety ranging from plumbers and electricians to heating engineers and service maintenance engineers.

Since speaking to Greg, DYW were delighted to hear that RI Cruden Ltd has gone on to win the Net Zero Apprentice Employer of the Year 2023 with Skills Development Scotland and Scottish Apprenticeships, and four of their apprentices have been recognised with awards at both regional and national level:

Joe Embelton – 1st Year Inverness UHI Plumbing Apprentice of the Year 2023

Michael Vass – 1st Year Electrical Apprentice of the Year at the SECTT Awards 2023

Finlay Calder – 3rd Year Scottish Plumbing Apprentice of the Year 2023

Ricky Mackenzie – 4th Year Edinburgh College Heating and Ventilation Apprentice of the Year 2023

Ricky Mackenzie and Dylan Burke are also nominated finalists in The Building Services Association (BESA) awards this October at their national awards ceremony in London. Callum Cruden, Director, RI Cruden said:

"We are extremely proud of our award-winning apprenticeship scheme and determined to progress the future of our business by investing in local young talent. We hire a minimum of 3 apprentices each year in different areas of the business and were delighted that so many have been recognised for their hard work. We hope all our apprentices go on to develop long careers with RI Cruden, following in Greg's footsteps by progressing into senior supervisor roles. I came through an apprenticeship program myself and know first-hand the opportunities apprenticeships give not only to young people, but to our business and the wider construction industry as a whole." Sandra McCaughey, Interim Project Manager at DYW Inverness & Central Highlands added:

"Congratulations to Joe, Michael, Finley, Ricky and Dylan. It's great to see a local business so committed to developing the young workforce and offering opportunities for local young people. Demand for green jobs and green skills is expected to increase rapidly as a result of policy, legislative drivers and consumer choice and RI Cruden Ltd is at the

forefront of this up here in the Highlands driving forward with a policy to contribute to net zero and offering training and job security for our future workforce"

02

teclan

Leading local marketing agency teclan is thrilled to announce the record-breaking success of the 2023 Million Steps for Mikeyline Challenge. This year's challenge saw participants collectively walk an astounding 47,380,472 steps, underscoring the commitment of individuals and businesses toward supporting mental health initiatives. 2023's efforts have so far raised over £6,000 including GiftAid contributions for local mental health charity, Mikeyline.

Born during the challenging times of the 2020 lockdown when physical and mental well-being was of utmost importance, the teclan team wanted to bring the community together while boosting physical and mental health.

2023 has proved to be a record-breaking year, with teams from teclan, Dicksons of Inverness, Highland News and Media, The Long Partnership, BNI Tuath, BNI Highland, Cru Holdings, Changeworks, Mikeyline, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, Norscot Joinery, Anderson Clark, and Murray Travel taking part.

Neil McGregor, teclan's Head of Sales and Business Development, who initially thought up the idea in 2020 said: "From its inception in 2020, the Million Steps for Mikeyline Challenge has exceeded all hopes and expectations. It stands as proof of the incredible force generated by unity, community cohesion, and a shared goal. We are proud to stand alongside Mikeyline and want to thank every team that has taken part."

The funds raised through this initiative will directly contribute to Mikeyline's efforts in providing essential mental health support services to those who need help the most. Emily Stokes, CEO of Mikeyline, said: "This event, which involves recruiting a number of businesses to take part, not only raises awareness of Mikeyline's services and encourages participants to think about their physical and mental well-being, but raises a crucial amount of funds to make a significant difference to our charity. We are so very grateful for our partnership with teclan and the other partnerships facilitated through this annual fundraiser."

For more information about the Million Steps for Mikeyline Challenge please visit:

www.teclan.com/million-steps-for-mikeyline/



03

Parklands

Parklands' care homes have been playing host to local drag queens this summer as part of Parklands Pride, a celebration of love and life.

Over the course of three weeks, hundreds of residents, relatives and staff were treated to song routines from Miss Lossie Mouth and Venus Guytrap. Parklands Pride events were held in Tain, Fortrose, Muir of Ord, Grantown and Aberlour.

Donald Morrison, Parklands' Communications Director said: "Parklands Pride has been amazing fun for residents and staff. We've never hosted an event like this before and the response from our homes has been fantastic. It an experience we won't ever forget."

John Campbell, performing as Miss Lossie Mouth, said: "I never thought in my life I'd be performing in a care home, but what an amazing opportunity. So much warmth, so much fun and the audience were receptive, it was brilliant. Congratulations to Parklands for giving that visibility to the LGBTQ+ community."

Darryl Alexander Geegan, who performs as Venus Guytrap, added: "I've worked in care for many years myself, so to be doing something like this is just phenomenal. I was so grateful to be asked."

04

Albyn Housing Society

Families across the Highlands will benefit from new energy support funded by energy companies. Social housing provider Albyn Housing Society has secured funds for a scheme that will provide expert energy advice to their tenants, to help them save money and improve living standards.

Graeme Hamilton, Tenancy Sustainment Manager at Albyn Housing Society said: "This past winter has been very challenging for our tenants. Many of us working in social housing have never seen it as tough. We have been supporting tenants throughout with cash payments, energy saving products like slow cookers, and providing carpets and curtains for those who are without."

"This new scheme which Albyn is leading will build on our work and provide expert advice for our tenants on how to make the most of their heating and the fuel that they use."

"Many of our families are not connected to the gas grid and have to rely on more expensive forms of heating such as electric or oil heating. These extreme rural locations are already much colder than other parts of the UK too."

"Our teams are committed to easing the burden on Albyn tenants to help them through the cost of living crisis. Having to choose between heating and eating can have serious challenges for mental and physical health. With our support, we hope to make the cost of living crisis as manageable as possible for all of our customers."

MEMBERS' NEWS

05 Loch Ness Marathon

Teams from businesses and organisations across the Highlands will be pounding the streets of Inverness for the 10K Corporate Challenge on 1 October, with thousands more individual runners taking on the Baxters Loch Ness Marathon, River Ness 10K and 5K.

The 10K Corporate Challenge is open to both the public and private sector and is for teams of four to six runners. The fastest four times within the team combine towards the overall time, so there is an incentive for workmates to train together and motivate each other along the route.

The flat 10K course winds through the historic Highland capital of Inverness, passing the Castle along the banks of the picturesque River Ness and is perfect for PB chasers and first timers alike.

Event director Malcolm Sutherland says, "The 10K Corporate Challenge is a great team building and bonding opportunity and we look forward to welcoming teams from across the Highlands."

Entry to the River Ness 10K, Corporate Challenge, 5K and Wee Nessie is now open with charity and club runner places to the Loch Ness Marathon. Sign up here: www.lochnessmarathon.com

06 Macdonald Partnership

Integrity365 Limited is delighted to announce the acquisition of Inverness and Arbroath based, MacDonald Partnership, and welcome their highly experienced Scotland based Independent Financial Advisers and support staff to the team.

Established in Inverness in 1978 by Ian MacDonald, and now run by his son, Ross, MacDonald Partnership has an enviable reputation for providing trusted financial advice to their clients that spans generations. With over 25 years in the industry himself, Ross is supported by an accomplished and skilful team, who are dedicated to delivering practical and professional independent financial advice to individuals, families, businesses and trusts across Scotland.

Integrity365 Limited, an established independent advisory business renowned for their client-first approach, will be expanding into Scotland with this deal and are keen to further develop on the legacy built by Ian and Ross.



05 Can you take on the challenge like these River Ness 10K runners?



06 Macdonald Partnership IFA and Partner, Ross Macdonald

Integrity365 Limited's commitment to their family ethos will see MacDonald Partnership retain their own brand and offer support for further growth and development, which will ultimately provide greater benefits to existing and future clients.

MacDonald Partnership IFA and Partner, Ross Macdonald comments: "The MacDonald Partnership team and I are excited to unite with Integrity365 Limited and look forward to developing our business with them further and expanding our client offering. Integrity365 Limited have been respectful and supportive of the history of the MacDonald Partnership name, one that is recognised across Scotland, and we look forward to growing it further afield."

07 ROOTS Festival

ROOTS Festival 2023 is Vivid Roots Collective's first ever theatre festival for Highland and emerging theatre-makers. Come along to celebrate the talented artists in the region, learn new skills, and meet like-minded creatives with talks, workshops, performances and networking!

This year has been programmed in response to their recent report, FUTURES, which evidences the needs of emerging theatre-makers in the Highlands. You can read the report, see the full digital programme, and learn more about the company on their website (<https://vividrootscollective.co.uk/>).

Vivid Roots Collective are also seeking sponsors for the event. Sponsors will help Vivid Root's goals to create more theatre in the Highlands, keep talent and artists in the region, and celebrate the talent and culture of our region.

By sponsoring this event, you will be helping to keep ticket sales low to account for the cost of living crisis; helping to pay all of the artists involved fairly as speakers, facilitators, and event managers; and aligning your brand with their vision of a booming local arts and performance culture, and the retention of the region's talented young people and emerging theatre-makers.

ROOTS is supported in-kind by the Spectrum Centre; funded in part by the National Lottery via Creative Scotland; and funded in part by Start-It! from the Social Entrepreneurs Fund, delivered by First Port.



07 ROOTS festival will feature a full programme of workshops for emerging theatre makers.



08 The Port of Inverness

08 Port of Inverness

The Port of Inverness is looking to recruit at least one Trustee from 1st February, 2024. The Port's profile has grown considerably and is an integral member of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. As well as handling a wide range of cargos, the Port is also one of the main focal points for the renewable energy industry in the Highlands.

George Macleod, Chair of Inverness Harbour Trust, said "The Port's strategic vision is bold and exciting, and as part of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport the Port is at the heart of the region's transition to net zero. We will be looking for someone who can help shape and direct the Port's vision."

Ideally the appointee should have a maritime background with an understanding of ports and the shipping industry being advantageous or alternatively a background in the renewable energy industry. The ability to think strategically as well as contributing at board level are essential.

Appointments are part-time, normally two days per month with a minimum of six Board meetings per annum. Induction and training will be available to the appointed individual.

For more information, please read the Board Member Application Information available at www.portofinverness.co.uk



Swimmers tackle the tides for the Kessock Ferry Swim

09 Àban Outdoor

The 2023 edition of Àban Outdoor's Kessock Ferry Swim was another great success. Run in partnership with the local community in Merkinch, the historic Kessock Ferry Swim is their main annual fundraising event. The event follows the classic route, which is approximately 1200m out-and-back across the tidal narrows between South Kessock and North Kessock. After some uncertain weather in the morning, the skies brightened up and made for a great day. There were some familiar faces and some new ones, and Àban congratulate each and every one of you who got stuck in. 25% of all sponsorship proceeds will be donated to Clachnacuddin F.C., who provide opportunities for young, local players to participate and progress to the senior game. The charity gives a big thank you to all the swimmers, spectators, and volunteers who make this event possible. Keep an eye on their website (aban.scot) and socials for updates on the 2024 edition. Who's practicing for next year?

MEMBERS' NEWS



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The team at Highland BlindCraft



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Interface

Bringing the right people together

Interface asks farmers: "what's the problem?"



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Nicola McKay and Tiffany Murray from Converged Communications Solutions



11

MFTG are proud to offer electric vehicle training



14

MACKENZIE CONSTRUCTION

Andy Dalrymple and Mark Bramley, Managing Director and Inverness Regional Director of Mackenzie Construction

10

Highland BlindCraft

Highland BlindCraft is celebrating a trio of high profile award nominations.

The nominations recognise the team's commitment to manufacturing high quality mattresses, divans and headboards, as well as its dedication to supporting those living with disabilities in the Highlands.

The company was nominated for two trophies at the Highland Business Women Awards – Best Third Sector Organisation and Most Enterprising Business – as well as the Building Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Justice award at the Social Enterprise Scotland Awards.

Executive manager Heather McDonald said: "We are so proud of the work we do at Highland BlindCraft, not only producing high quality products at affordable prices, but also providing opportunities for people in our community that may be passed over by others.

"These nominations are a testament to the hard work and dedication of all our team – those working on the factory floor, the back office, the showroom and the training room."

Highland BlindCraft has been hand making divans, mattresses and headboards in its Inverness factory for over 140 years. It is staffed by a skilled workforce of master craftspeople, all of whom are living with visual impairments and other disabilities. Visit www.hIGHLANDBLINDCRAFT.CO.UK or the Inverness showroom for more information.

11

Moray Firth Training Group

Moray Firth Training Group, established in 1966, have consistently provided First Aid training, Motor Vehicle Apprenticeships, and MOT Training

throughout the Highlands and Islands. In response to the climate emergency, they have now added Electric Vehicle training to the list of courses they deliver.

The Electric Vehicle Training is designed for those people who may encounter Electric / Hybrid vehicles within a routine maintenance situation. It also contains the knowledge and skills required to work safely around a vehicle that may have had damage to its high energy or electrical system.

Participants in this combined enhanced course, which contains two mandatory units EV2.2 and EV3, will acquire significant core knowledge and skills to remove and replace Electric / Hybrid vehicle high voltage systems. The course is also endorsed by the IMI, The Institute of the Motor Industry.

Mark Ogilvie, Managing Director of Moray Firth Training says: "We are very pleased to offer this training just as our new intake of Apprentices arrive with us in September. EV1 will now be a mandatory part of their training which we have built into the programme as they are the

technicians of the future who will be involved with electric vehicles in the years to come and the diversity it brings to the Highlands."

For further information on this or any other of MFTG's courses please visit their website at www.mftg.co.uk, email training@mftg.co.uk or call 01463 230036.

12

Interface

This is a challenging time for organisations all over Scotland affected by the cost crisis and steep hikes in the many areas of running a business. Business owners

are needing to identify creative ways to address these challenges of growth and survival. Interface can support business by catalysing connections between business and universities.

Farmers are being asked: "What's the problem?" in a new campaign aimed at encouraging them to innovate to future-proof their businesses. Interface is a free service which matches businesses to academic teams and individuals to address challenges through research and development. The organisation has team members throughout Scotland who can help farming businesses achieve their ambitions, no matter the size or scope.

Projects can support activities to reduce costs; improve efficiencies and resilience; adopt new technologies; combat weather impacts; manage waste; identify additional income streams; and diversify farming businesses. From automation, data and digital, through to sensors and engineering, the knowledge base in our country's universities is vast and can be applied in all kinds of ways and to all sorts of issues.

Lorraine Thomson, Business Engagement Manager at Interface, says of the project "Finding solutions to long-term problems can be challenging for farmers because of lack of time and resource, but we can help address problems and plan for a sustainable future by offering a direct route into Scotland's world-leading universities, research institutes and colleges saving the farming community time, money and effort by matching them to the right expertise".

See more information here: <https://bit.ly/44QucMn>

13

Converged

Two women are bucking the trend when it comes to cyber security expertise, having recently become fully qualified Cyber Essentials Assessors.

Nicola McKay and Tiffany Murray, who work for Aberdeen-based IT, cyber security and internet service provider, Converged Communication Solutions, have joined the male-dominated field, having each amassed over three years of experience in IT security and recently passed the Assessor Skills exam.

Only 20% of the cyber security industry is female, according to the world's leading researcher in the global cyber economy, Cybersecurity Ventures, amidst an estimated shortage in cyber professionals of three million.

"It's high time women were proportionately represented in the cyber industry, and there is clearly huge potential for women to leverage their experiences into success within the sector," says Converged's Managing Director, Neil Christie. "Nicola and Tiffany were the only females of the 14 students on their respective courses, so this is a significant step forwards and a great achievement for them.

"Cyber-attacks take a variety of forms, but the vast majority are very basic in nature, carried out by relatively unskilled individuals," continues Neil. "Investing in Tiffany and Nicola's training and development was an easy decision – allowing us to continue to have all the skills in-house to take clients from initial assessment through to accreditation.

"Investing in Cyber Essentials allows a business to demonstrate security against a cyber-attack, and helps them attract new business," says Neil. "Our cyber security assessors guide businesses through the process, giving them the confidence to take control of their cyber security."

14

Mackenzie Construction

Civil engineering company, Mackenzie Construction, has strengthened its position in the North of Scotland through investment in a new Inverness office

following the appointment of Mark Bramley as Regional Director in late 2022. Mackenzie Construction has been working in the North of Scotland for over 20 years and these investments will allow the business to build upon success to date in the area.

With an impressive portfolio of ongoing undertakings and past project successes for clients such as Scottish Water, Scottish Canals, Inverness Airport (HIAL) and Historic Environment Scotland (HES), the Inverness office also has a wider capacity and capability for clients to call upon and as part of this growth ambition, Mackenzie is actively recruiting in the area to bolster the existing team.

Mark Bramley, Inverness Regional Director, said: "I am delighted to lead the expansion of our team in Inverness as we enter this new growth phase. We're privileged to work with a diverse range of clients, in inspiring and exciting environments in the North of Scotland and I'm looking forward to seeing Mackenzie's commitment and investment in the area support our ambitions of being a leading civil engineering and structural refurbishment contractor here, just as we are across other parts of the country."

movers &shakers



Ally Burr

Brodies

UK top 50 and leading Scottish law firm Brodies LLP has grown its Highlands team with the appointment of two lawyers specialising in commercial services and energy.

Associate Ally Burr advises clients on intellectual property, commercial contracts and data protection, and was ranked as a 'rising star' for IP in Scotland in Managing IP's IP Stars 2022. Solicitor Marc Penman works with upstream and service sector businesses in the oil & gas sector, and provides advice on general commercial matters, public procurement, and commercial contracts.

Both lawyers will be based at Brodies' Inverness office at Cradlehall Business Park.



Marc Penman



Promotions and success at WJM

Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie LLP

Leading Scottish law firm, Wright, Johnston & Mackenzie LLP (WJM), is celebrating a successful month as the promotions of two staff members and STEP qualifications of three colleagues are announced.

Leanne Follan, a valuable member of the firm's renewables team in Glasgow, and Ben White, who has been working with the CRG team in Edinburgh, have both been promoted from the position of Senior Solicitors to Associate following their continued contributions to the firm's success.

Additionally, three of WJM's team members have successfully obtained full qualifications from the Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP), further enhancing the firm's capabilities in trusts, executries, and taxation.

Associate Solicitors Alison Reid and Hannah Prentice, based in the firm's Inverness office, and Senior Solicitor Nicola McGorm, based in Glasgow, have all successfully passed their respective examinations and obtained their STEP Diplomas.

It comes as Alison demonstrated exceptional prowess by securing the award for the best result in Taxation of Trusts and Executries for 2022.

RASASH

RASASH (Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland) have welcomed Eilidh Little as their Fundraising and Communications Worker. Eilidh is a seasoned fundraising and communications professional with a passion for creating positive change. With a proven track record in the charity sector, Eilidh excels in crafting compelling narratives and engaging campaigns that drive impactful results. Her strategic approach to fundraising has successfully garnered crucial resources for local initiatives, while her exceptional communication skills have connected communities and supporters alike. A dedicated advocate for the Highlands, Eilidh continues to elevate the region's charitable efforts, bringing her expertise and commitment to this new role for RASASH.



Eilidh Little

Parklands

Parklands Care Homes has appointed Lynne Anderson as its new Director of Human Resources (HR). With an impressive track record as a Senior People Partner at Global Energy Group and a wealth of operational, management, and HR experience in both retail and care sectors, Lynne brings invaluable expertise to the Parklands group.

Managing Director Ron Taylor said: "Lynne's passion for fostering a positive work culture aligns perfectly with Parklands' core values."

Lynne added: "It's important to me that the company I work for lives by great values, and in Parklands this shines through! My vision in this role is to enhance our employee experience and, by doing so, elevate the experience for our residents."



Lynne Anderson

Dynam

Rebecca McQuater has joined Dynam as an Account Executive, fresh from graduating with an honours degree in Digital Marketing from Robert Gordon University. This is the only dedicated digital marketing degree in Scotland, and Rebecca was part of the first cohort to graduate from the course.

Already an integral part of their marketing team, Dynam has welcomed Rebecca as part of HIE's Technology Placement programme. With a real passion for social media, her favourite platform is TikTok. Thanks to the app favouring raw content, Rebecca likes that anyone can make a viral TikTok video, and loves reacting to current trends.



Rebecca McQuater

Orion Group

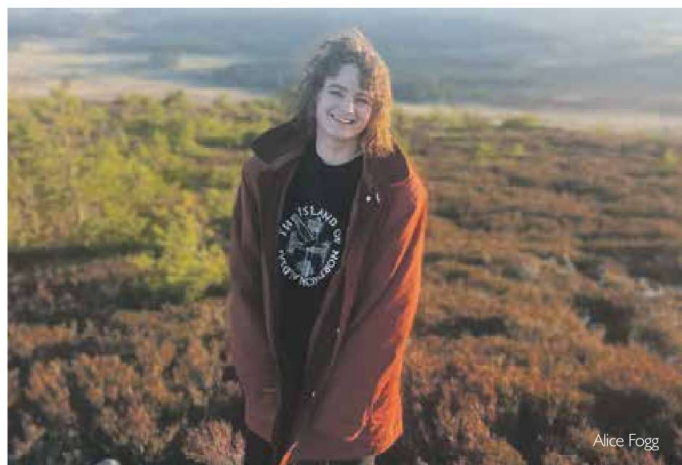
Orion Group is delighted to announce that John Macritchie has joined the business, to support the continued expansion of our established Inverness recruitment team.

John joined in August 2023 and brings with him a wealth of experience. John said: "I have worked in recruitment for 15-years and have supported many candidates and clients across the North of Scotland. I'm passionate about what I do and am really excited to have joined Orion Group as a Senior Recruitment Consultant, where I'll be actively involved in the construction and civil engineering sectors."

The group would like to welcome John to the company and wish him every success for the future.



John Macritchie



Alice Fogg

Highlands and Islands Climate Hub

Highlands and Islands Climate Hub have welcomed Alice Fogg as their new Community and Digital Engagement Officer. She'll be working with communities across Inverness and the surrounding areas to support community-led climate action projects. This could be anything from clothes swaps to community growing. With a background in geography, research and nature engagement, Alice is bringing lots of skill in community engagement to the role. Enthusiastic, motivated and innovative, Alice is definitely one to watch!

Laura Auld



Harper Macleod

Laura Auld has recently joined Harper Macleod's Employment & Immigration team as an Associate. She is based in their Inverness Office and works with clients throughout the Highlands, Islands and Moray. Having specialised in employment law throughout her career, Laura has worked with individuals as well as businesses of all sizes and from a multitude of sectors. Laura supports employer clients on the full spectrum of employment law matters, and advises on the employment law aspects of commercial transactions and represents clients in Employment Tribunal proceedings. Laura enjoys building trusted relationships with her clients and is passionate about working with them, empowering them to make informed decisions about risks and what is right for their business, and supporting them to achieve their desired outcomes.

Welcome to **new** members

Accommodation

Highland Homes and Estates

Phone: 07885561067

Email: highlandhomesestates@gmail.com

Aviation

Small World Aviation Group Ltd

Phone: 01463575666

Web: <http://flyswx.com>

Coaching

Anne Beth Jordan

Phone: 07951764814

Web:

www.linkedin.com/in/beth-jordan-jordanabcoaching/

Maria Anderson Coaching Ltd

Phone: 07427187501

Web: <https://mariaandersoncoaching.com/>

Food and Drink

Aquascot Ltd

Phone: 01349899804

Web: www.aquascot.com

Roehill Springs Distillery

Phone: 01542870328

Web: <https://roehillsprings.com/>

Energy

Balcas Energy

Phone: 07795252537

Web: <https://balcasenergy.com/>

Engineering

ESR UK (Group)

Phone: 01464829313

Web: <https://esruk.com>

Eurolan Services

Phone: 01463718131

Web: <https://eurolanservices.com/>

Entrepreneurs

Angus Macdonald

Phone: 07768702577

Email: amacdonald@moidarttrust.co.uk

Film

Firth Studio LTD

Phone: 01463592658

Web: <https://studiofirth.com/>

Health and Safety

Safety-Zone

Phone: 07977023254

Web: <https://www.safety-zone.scot/>

Ports

Haventus

Phone: 0166765600

Web: <https://www.haventus.com/>

Theatre

Vivid Roots Collective Ltd

Phone: 07934944693

Web: <https://vividrootscollective.co.uk/>

Transport

Inverness Taxis

Phone: 01463222222

Web: <https://inverness-taxis.com/>

Inverness Chamber of Commerce

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membership@inverness-chamber.co.uk

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If you are interested in becoming an Executive Partner, please contact Clare Armstrong on 07563 381637.