

James Forbes
Director of Engineering
Mabbett



Biography

I am the Director of Engineering at Mabbett, a company that provides environmental, planning, engineering, safety and design services across the Highlands and beyond. As well as directing a group in the company, I hold a dual role and head-up Mabbett's Highland and Inverness offices, which cover 3 locations and over 20 employees. I am a chartered engineer and environmentalist and routinely support clients as they work to minimise environmental impact, reduce carbon emissions and work towards net zero. I am responsible for leading a diverse team of engineering professionals, with accountability for group commercial and technical performance. I have experience in conflict management and resolution as I oversee a wider engineering team of over 30 professionals.

Personal Statement

Below I have outlined my reasons for standing for election and the skills and experience I believe I would bring to the Board:

- Election to the Board would allow me to speak on areas of business that are thriving in the Highlands but do not appear to currently be represented. These areas are engineering, sustainability, planning, safety, design, etc.
- Due to the client facing nature of my profession and role, I believe I would be able to represent not just the sector in which I work but also the clients I work with. I have regular involvement with large industrial clients across the Highlands that work in food & drink, healthcare, aquaculture, manufacturing, etc.
- In my role, I am board facing at Mabbett and therefore have regular interaction at that level. I would bring this experience of business commercial, environmental, social and sustainability to the role.

- I understand business risk management and strategy development as I am actively involved in this on a daily basis for Mabbett.
- In a time when environmental awareness and preparedness is central to business operations, I would be able to provide technical and practical experience in this area. I would be able to help advise the Chamber of Commerce (and its members) through the complexities and requirements around net zero and carbon neutrality.
- In both my work and personal life, I believe acting with integrity and to high ethical standards is crucial. I have been awarded a fellowship from the Chartered Institute of Water and Environmental Management (FCIWEM) – the institute’s highest award. As part of this, I have demonstrated alignment with the institute’s ethical standards. We also hold ethical standards at a company level.

Nomination Supported By:

Lyndsey Wilkinson, Global Highland
Callum Cruden, RI Cruden

David Howarth
Managing Director
iDE8



Biography

I am deeply embedded in the health, life sciences, and medical devices sector, with a broad international perspective and a firm grounding in Scotland's vibrant scientific community. My 20+ year career has been dedicated to advancing the frontiers of healthcare, championing innovative medical technologies, and supporting research that promises to redefine our approach to patient care.

Championing Life Science Businesses in the Highlands

Supporting life science businesses in the Highlands is crucial for several reasons:

Economic Growth: Stimulating this sector can significantly contribute to the region's economic development, creating high-skilled jobs and attracting investment.

Innovation and Healthcare Advancement: The Highlands has the opportunity to become a centre for innovation, contributing to advancements in healthcare that can have a global impact.

Sustainable Development: Life sciences focused on medical devices and biotechnology can lead the way in sustainable practices, aligning with Scotland's environmental goals.

Personal Statement

Reasons for Standing for Election

Advocacy for Life Sciences in the Highlands: I aim to leverage my international experience to spotlight the Highlands as a burgeoning hub for life sciences. The region's unique resources, including its rich biodiversity and highly skilled workforce, present untapped opportunities for groundbreaking research and development.

Supporting Innovation and Sustainability: My goal is to foster an environment where innovation in medical devices and life sciences can flourish alongside sustainable practices, ensuring that the growth of this sector benefits both the environment and local communities.

Building Bridges: I am passionate about connecting the Highlands' life sciences sector with global markets and research networks, thereby attracting investment and expertise to the region.

Skills and Experience

International Collaboration

With over two decades of experience in the medical devices sector, including the last nine years at iDE8 based in Inverness, my career is marked by a strong record of international collaboration. This experience is pivotal for enhancing the global reach and competitiveness of the Highlands' life sciences sector. My extensive work across different countries has not only broadened my perspective but also deepened my understanding of the global healthcare landscape. This positions me uniquely to champion innovative projects within the medical devices domain, providing critical support to startups as they navigate complex regulatory landscapes and strive for international growth.

Sector-Specific Expertise

My tenure in the life sciences and medical device sector has equipped me with profound technical knowledge and insight into the challenges and opportunities facing healthcare today. From conceptualising breakthrough medical devices to overseeing their development and market launch, my expertise spans the entire product lifecycle. This comprehensive understanding allows me to advocate effectively for advancements in medical technology and healthcare solutions, emphasising innovation and patient safety.

Leadership and Strategic Vision

Over the last ten years, I have honed my leadership skills, guiding organisations through significant growth and pivotal changes. My strategic vision has been instrumental in aligning organisational objectives with the evolving needs of the healthcare sector, ensuring long-term sustainability and impact. This experience underscores my capacity to lead with foresight and resilience, driving initiatives that foster scientific advancement and improve healthcare outcomes.

Nomination Supported By:

Fergus Weir, teclan

Eunice McAdam, Saffery

Victoria Park
Senior Regional Sales Manager – UK North
AC by Marriott Inverness / Hotel Co 51 UK



Biography

I have thirty years of hotel sales and tourism experience which has covered a variety of projects. These include managing the business tourism European funded project and establishing a convention bureau for the Ayrshire & Arran region; at the end of the project the convention bureau was integrated into VisitScotland.

I have worked internationally for Starwood Hotels & Resorts and managed the West Region of America Global Sales office. Accounts managed included Starbucks, Gap, Visa, Twitter, Salesforce; these gave me great insight into how large global companies operate and their priorities.

I have also worked in business development roles with The Lemon Tree, an arts venue in Aberdeen and the Royal Scottish National Orchestra.

My current position with Hotel Co 51 UK Ltd is Senior Regional Sales Manager – UK North where I manage a team of three sales managers and one sales executive and am responsible for the performance of nine hotels across Scotland and Northern England. I am personally responsible for the AC by Marriott Inverness which exceeded its opening year's budget.

Personal Statement

My reasons for standing for election as a non-executive director on the Inverness Chamber of Commerce Board are as follows:

- Wealth of experience and knowledge of hotel sales and tourism both nationally and internationally.
- Currently working in Inverness and partnering with local and global companies.
- Understanding the effectiveness of good business strategies and implementing these into effective business plans.
- Managing European business and golf tourism projects.

- Desire to be part of a successful team who drives strategy for Inverness across a variety of segments.

Nomination Supported By:

Michael Rainford, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines

Andrew Benjamin, Maggie's Highlands

Stéphane Portès
General Manager
The Drumossie Hotel



Biography

I am currently the General Manager for The Drumossie Hotel, part of Macdonald Hotels and Resorts, and was previously GM at Norwood Hall Hotel, Aberdeen. With thirty years' experience in hospitality both in the UK and internationally, previous roles include Head of Hospitality & Retail Services at the House of Lords and Hotel Operations Director for Goldman Sachs' European headquarters in London. I hold an MBA from Oxford Brookes University, am a Board member for the Highlands and Islands Tourism Awards, an Ambassador for Highland Tourism and an advisor/member for Visit Inverness Loch Ness.

Personal Statement

Since the pandemic, I have witnessed the unprecedented closure of small businesses within the Highlands, with devastating effects on many sectors, and particularly hospitality.

Over the last few years, I have noted how the Chamber of Commerce has been true to its mission to act for the prosperity of businesses and stood with strong positions on the issues at the heart of business concerns and community to accelerate the growth of local business.

If elected to the Inverness Chamber Board, I intend to deploy my energy and my abilities to the fullest to contribute to the Chamber's mission and members' expectations and needs.

My professional background includes a managerial position at the House of Lords for over nine years, as well as others senior roles in hospitality including Macdonald Hotels & Resorts, the Savoy and the Ritz Hotel. I have completed an MBA at Oxford Brookes which has led me to develop strong strategic planning, communication, and collaboration skills. I am committed to leveraging these skills to drive initiatives that promote entrepreneurship, innovation, and community development within the Highlands.

My current role as General Manager of the Drumossie Hotel has help me to gained valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities facing businesses in the Highlands. I am eager

to leverage this experience to develop and implement initiatives that support economic growth, foster innovation, and enhance the competitiveness of our local businesses and residents.

I would expect to achieve this by bringing my perspective and dedication to inclusivity and diversity, ensuring that the Chamber serves the needs of all its members.

I am eager to collaborate with fellow Board directors to develop and implement strategies that strengthen the local economy, promote innovation, and create opportunities for growth and prosperity. If elected as an Inverness Chamber of Commerce director, I hope to be able to support the specific needs of members and assist their growth in the region's business community and ultimately help shape the next five years of the Chamber's strategy.

Nomination Supported By:

Steve Barron, Highland News & Media

Kai Logan, KBE Event Services

Gavin Ross
Managing Director
SGL Carbon



Biography

I have worked in both the public and private sectors prior to moving up to the Highlands from Stirling in 2021 with my wife and four children and settling in Fortrose. I joined LifeScan just as Johnson and Johnson bought the company, working there for 18 years as Senior Engineering Manager until 2017. I joined SGL for three years then left to join Northeast Nutrition in Invergordon who are part of Cooke Aquaculture. I rejoined SGL last year and I am currently restructuring the business to meet the current market demands.

I am currently renovating a Mirror Class offshore yacht complete with inboard diesel engine. I enjoy innovation and have a patent in my name. I enjoy swimming, cycling and hill walking and am a keen fly fisher.

Personal Statement

I am a professional with a proven track record of leadership in large, manufacturing industries. Currently serving as the Managing Director of SGL Carbon Fibres Ltd, I have a background in engineering and business management and have held various executive positions throughout my career. I have skills in operations management, business development, and strategic planning. I solve problems and have a passion for driving innovation and sustainability within industry. I have a hands-on approach, collaborative leadership style, and ability to inspire teams to achieve their full potential.

I have a BEng (Hons) in Engineering and an MSc in Supply Chain and Operations Management. Whilst at LifeScan I led a very successful Engineering Apprenticeship program that won a SDS award and was accredited by the IEEE and iMechE institutes. I was a STEM ambassador and have a passion for development and training.

I believe that I can bring these skills and experience that I have learned in large, blue chip companies to bring a different perspective to the role of non-executive director with Inverness Chamber of Commerce.

Nomination Supported By:

Tomasz Bernard, LifeScan Scotland

Marc Wilson, High Life Highland