



AT THE HEART OF HIGHLAND BUSINESS

Celebrating Highland Business Week

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Highland Spotlight enjoyed record numbers for a second year.

HIGHLAND BUSINESS WEEK 2026 PUTS HIGHLAND BUSINESS CENTRE STAGE

Highland Business Week 2026 brought the region's business community together for a week of insight and connection, with Chamber members once again taking an active role in shaping the programme.

Across the week, **Azets, MAKAR, StrategyStory, Mikeysline, supported by Highland Council, and Tulloch Homes** all opened their doors to share their expertise and create opportunities for others to learn and explore new ideas. From practical sessions and specialist insight, to opportunities to meet the people behind businesses across the region, the programme reflected the breadth of experience within Highland's business community.

The week also provided an opportunity to celebrate success, with the Highland Business Awards bringing more than 270 people together at the Kingsmills Hotel. The awards recognised businesses and individuals making their mark across the region and further afield. It was a real celebration of the success of Highland Businesses.

That same spirit was evident at Highland Spotlight, the week's flagship business exhibition, which brought more than 400 delegates and over 70 exhibitors together at the Drumossie Hotel.

Reflecting on this year's event, **Chamber CEO Colin Marr said**, "Highland Spotlight continues to show what can happen when Highland businesses come together. What stood out for me was the breadth of businesses taking part – including so many new exhibitors alongside organisations that have supported Spotlight over the years.

"The conversations happening around the room were a great reflection of the strength of our business community. Whether businesses were looking to raise their profile, find new opportunities or simply connect with the people behind other organisations, there was a real sense of openness and collaboration. Importantly, there was also a lot of business being done."



Inverness Chamber Chief Executive Colin Marr and Membership Executive Oshaan Weerasekera.



Libby MacDonald of We Are Thryve speaks to Stuart Fiddes of Fiddes Plant & Crane Training.

For **Stuart Fiddes of Fiddes Plant and Crane Training**, attending Spotlight for the first time proved a significant opportunity. He said, "I was absolutely blown away by the business done in a few hours. New connections, old connections strengthened – it was a massive step for the business." His stand was so busy that he added, with a touch of humour, that Spotlight could have run for two days.

For **Corinne Thomas, founder of Ethical Sales**, the event demonstrated the diversity of businesses operating across the region. She described the Highlands as *knowing* "how to network", adding that she was struck by "the incredible diversity of businesses in the region from boutique HR consulting to leading manufacturing". She also highlighted the "buzz about the transformational potential of new technology" and praised the Spotlight Seminar, hosted by **Strut and BC Technologies**, for its focus on protecting businesses and brands in an AI-focused world.

Bracewell also highlighted the opportunity to make meaningful connections, describing Spotlight as "a great opportunity to showcase the work we do, connect with new people and strengthen existing relationships". The event also gave the team the chance to meet "the people behind the expertise, innovation and ambition shaping our business community".

And for **Darren Ross of STV**, it was the atmosphere that stayed with him. He said he was "still buzzin'" after the event, having met "many fabulous and friendly business owners and decision makers" and already identified follow-up conversations. He added, "The sheer optimism, that may lack in other regions, was well & truly on show today for the Highlands & Islands."

Creating space for Highland's rising stars

One of the standout features of this year's Spotlight was the **Rising Stars Zone**, supported by **Inverness Chamber of Commerce and Developing the Young Workforce Inverness & Central Highland** to give newer businesses the opportunity to showcase what they do and make connections alongside more established exhibitors.

For **Lauren Geddes, founder of Catalyse**, the experience was "an incredible day chatting with so many inspiring and supportive businesses of all shapes and sizes here in the Highlands". She described being included in the Rising Stars category as "an amazing opportunity".

Angus Macleod, founder of Cocoa Bothy, used the event to showcase the business and connect with potential collaborators. He said he "loved every minute of talking all things chocolate, corporate gifting, retail and how this little brand is making big waves in the Highlands", adding that it was "so lovely to catch up with so many treasured connections and sign-up new businesses to collaborate with".



Rising Star Leah Campbell of Serenity Styling.



Trees for Life's Fundraising Officer Madeline Hayes chats to delegate.

For **Leah Campbell of Serenity Styling**, who launched her wedding dressing business in June 2026, the Rising Stars Zone provided an opportunity to introduce a new and niche service to people in Inverness. She said, "I found the kindness and support from people at the event outstanding. To get feedback and recommendations from people was hugely beneficial."

The benefits also extended beyond the day itself. Leah added, "I have been added to Bogbain and Highland Coast Hotel's supplier lists which without this event that may not have happened. I also met people who had other connections in the wedding industry which they will hopefully pass my details on to."

For a business in its earliest months, Leah said the experience also helped build her confidence, allowing her "to talk openly about my business to those that seemed genuinely interested". She would "absolutely" encourage other emerging businesses to apply for a Rising Stars place, describing it as "a wonderful event with a lovely and positive atmosphere".

Ar Gàradh CIC founder Kurtis McMillan, attending his first networking event, similarly highlighted the value of making new connections. He said, "It was great to meet so many folk and make important connections."

Together, the experiences of the Rising Stars reflect one of the wider strengths of Highland Spotlight – creating a space where businesses at different stages can meet, learn from one another and find opportunities to work together.

For Colin Marr, that sense of connection extended beyond the exhibition floor. He said, "The Spotlight Seminar also gave us an opportunity to look ahead. AI is moving quickly, and businesses need to understand not only how these tools can improve efficiency, but how they can be used with the right governance and human expertise. The opportunity is to use technology to give people more space for the strategic parts of their roles – not to lose the human expertise that makes businesses successful."

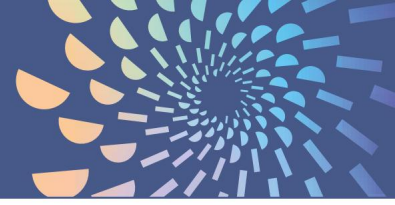
That combination of collaboration and shared optimism is what Highland Business Week is about. It is a chance for the business community to come together, but also to create the conversations that continue long after the event itself.

As Highland Business Week draws to a close, the conversations started during the week will continue – through new relationships, new ideas and businesses finding new ways to work together.

At the heart of it all is a simple idea – Highland business is strongest when it comes together.



(centre) Ar Gàradh CIC founder Kurtis McMillan speaks to visitors to his stand.



AI isn't just about cutting costs. It's how a small Highland business can scale.

Most AI conversations focus on saving money. Efficiency matters, but for small Highland businesses the opportunity is scale: what can a small team now take on?

For many firms, the answer is not more tools, but better habits, clearer processes and sensible governance.

From conversations with businesses that have embedded AI into their operations, four stages consistently stand out. While every organisation's journey is different, the most effective adopters often move through these stages as they progress towards meaningful impact.

It starts with everyday use. The first step is habit. The biggest gains often come from applying AI to routine work already happening, such as drafting, summarising, preparing notes or checking information.

The next stage is integration. As confidence grows, AI becomes part of existing workflows rather than a separate experiment. It can support customer relationship management, email, reporting and collaboration, creating operational benefits.

Next comes capability, not just access. Access alone is not enough. Better results come when people know how to ask good questions, validate outputs and recognise limitations.

Finally, focus on outcomes. The most successful businesses measure practical change: faster customer responses, quicker quotations, shorter reporting cycles or more consistent service.

That's when AI stops being a cost-cutting exercise and becomes something more useful: a small team doing things it couldn't before.

There is another consideration. In many businesses, AI is already being used unofficially. Staff may paste client emails, pricing or HR details into free tools without approval or visibility. This "shadow AI" is a common security gap and it is often growing quietly in the background while the official journey is still at stage one.

The answer is not a ban, it is governance. Know which tools are being used, agree what data must never leave the business, provide a secure, approved alternative and make ownership clear.

Scale AI safely and the story has a positive ending.

Highland businesses have always done more with less. AI offers another way to do that, provided it happens on their terms.

Keiron Scott, AI Consultant at Accord Business Solutions.



PROTECTING THE WORKFORCE BEHIND HIGHLAND GROWTH

The North of Scotland continues to see significant investment across energy, renewables, construction and infrastructure. This brings opportunity, but also a challenge that our local businesses already know too well: access to people and skills.

In a region with a relatively small working population, recruitment is only part of the answer. Retention matters too, with a focus on keeping people healthy, safe and able to remain in work.

For many businesses, Occupational Health is still associated primarily with medicals, health surveillance or managing sickness absence. These are important services, but there is much more we can do earlier.

Understanding the health risks within a workforce, carrying out the right health surveillance and acting on emerging concerns can prevent problems from becoming more serious. Early occupational health assessment can also help employers understand what support or adjustments might enable someone with a health condition to remain safely at work.



Amy MacRae, Managing Director at Alert Health Ltd.

Drug and alcohol issues are a good example. Testing is an important part of managing risk, particularly in safety-critical industries, but it should sit within a wider programme. Where appropriate, employees can have access to professional support and structured, progressive pathways that give them the opportunity to address the problem and return safely to work.

It's not about compromising safety or an employer's standards. It's about recognising there can be solutions to achieve a better outcome for both the individual and the business.

It's particularly relevant here in the Highlands and Islands, where replacing an experienced employee can be costly, time consuming and the loss of skills can have a significant impact on a business.

We need new investment, skills and people in our region. But we also need to make sure we are doing everything we reasonably can to protect, support and retain the workforce we already have.



Autumn planning: Getting your financial affairs in order before year-end

As the year draws to a close, many people review their finances, consider tax planning and set goals for the year ahead. It is also a good time to check that the practical and legal arrangements protecting you and your family are up to date.

One of the most important documents to review is your will. Without a valid will, your estate will be distributed according to legal rules that may not align with your intentions. Changes in family circumstances, property or finances can mean an existing will no longer reflects your wishes.

It is equally important to consider who could act on your behalf if you became unable to manage your own affairs. A Power of Attorney allows trusted individuals to make financial and welfare decisions should you lose capacity. Without one, loved ones may face a lengthy legal process to gain authority to help.

Good organisation can also make a significant difference. A clear record of bank accounts, pensions, investments, insurance policies and key contacts can reduce stress for family members and executors. With more information held online, trusted people should know how to access essential records.

These conversations are often put off, but acting early can provide reassurance and avoid unnecessary complications later.

Jordan Cairney, Financial Adviser at Ascot Lloyd in Inverness, says, "Many people spend years building financial security but give less thought to how their affairs would be managed if something unexpected happened. Taking time to review your will, Power of Attorney and key financial information can provide real peace of mind, both for you and for the people closest to you. Small steps taken now can make a significant difference in the future."

At Ascot Lloyd, our financial advisers help clients review their wider financial plans as circumstances change, so the wealth they have built can be managed and passed on as intended.



Jordan Cairney, Financial Adviser at Ascot Lloyd.

AI and Automation: Start with the problem, not the technology

Artificial Intelligence dominates business conversations today. Depending on who you listen to, it is either the solution to every challenge or a threat to every job. The reality, as always, sits somewhere in the middle.

Across many industries, there is growing pressure to "do something with AI". Businesses are being told they need strategies, chatbots, automation platforms and AI-powered tools. Yet the most important question is often overlooked: what problem are we actually trying to solve?

Technology has always delivered the greatest value when it addresses a genuine business challenge. AI is no different.

For some organisations, AI may help reduce time spent on repetitive administrative tasks. For others, automation can improve customer response times, streamline internal processes, or provide faster access to information. In many cases, the biggest opportunities are not revolutionary. They are small, practical improvements that give employees more time to focus on higher-value work.

The businesses seeing the best results are not necessarily the ones adopting AI the fastest. They are the ones taking the time to understand their processes, identify bottlenecks, and apply technology where it can make a measurable difference.

Equally, not every challenge needs an AI solution. Sometimes a process change, better training, or a simpler software tool will deliver greater value with less complexity. Good business leaders should feel comfortable challenging the assumption that AI is always the answer.

Technology should support business objectives, not dictate them.

As AI continues to evolve, successful organisations will be those that remain focused on outcomes rather than trends. The goal is not to implement AI for the sake of it. The goal is to solve problems, improve efficiency, and create better experiences for customers and employees alike.

In the end, the most effective AI strategy may simply be asking the right business questions before choosing the technology.



Ben Hosie, Commercial Director at sfG Software Ltd.

MEET THE MEMBER

Braedown



It's no secret that the Highlands sits at the centre of a transformational opportunity driven by the energy transition. But it's vital that the opportunity happens for us, not to us, according to Lindsay McCallum, the founder of Braedown – a strategic communications business based in the Highlands and operating across the UK.

With offshore and onshore wind, pumped storage, hydrogen, transmission upgrades and marine technologies driving much of this activity, it is creating far reaching opportunities for the region and beyond. The priority now is ensuring Highland businesses are positioned to drive this growth, creating a lasting legacy and tangible local benefits.

Lindsay, who is originally from the Highlands, but spent nearly two decades away working in senior communications roles in London, believes that while the scale of the opportunity is historic, it comes with complexities that businesses must navigate across policy, politics, and diverse stakeholder groups.

Lindsay explains, "Right now, Scotland's green energy landscape is complex, and the barrier isn't a lack of ambition, but a lack of alignment and joined-up working."

"The UK Government controls the market design, while the Scottish Government controls the planning and local development. Meanwhile, we have regulators, the grid operators, and local communities holding different pieces of the puzzle."

Delivering investment in this sector requires navigating a constantly shifting landscape, where energy businesses and their supply chains must operate across multiple tiers of government.

Lindsay says, "We work with business leaders to help them map this landscape, identify who they need to engage, build the right relationships, and make their case clearly. The challenge is rarely a lack of information. It's knowing what matters, who needs to hear it, when, and how to say it in a way that builds understanding rather than resistance."

Based in the Highlands, Braedown combines a genuine, rooted understanding of the region with nearly two decades of expertise spanning Westminster, Holyrood, and the regions. The team's work includes strategic communications, political and policy engagement, stakeholder and community relations, media management, and reputation strategy.

Lindsay is also chair of the Board of the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), the Highlands' largest independent childcare provider and joined the Board of Inverness Chamber of Commerce this year. For Lindsay, establishing Braedown in the Highlands was also about becoming part of the business community shaping the region's next chapter.

Lindsay concludes, "When I left school, the only option was to leave the region for further education. It was just how it was, but I don't think that's how it should be. Getting this next stage of growth right means giving young people the choice to stay, build their lives here and have access to good jobs, secure incomes and a decent quality of life."

We live in one of the most beautiful parts of the UK. The energy transition gives us a real opportunity to make sure more people can build a good life here, now and for generations to come."

Lindsay McCallum, Founder of Braedown.



MEET THE MEMBER

Libby MacDonald, Founder of We Are Thryve



I founded We Are Thryve after more than 12 years in HR. Based in the Scottish Highlands, we work with clients from Caithness down to Edinburgh, with plans to grow further. I love helping growing businesses build people foundations that are clear and grounded in who they are, not generic advice built from generic policies.

My route here has been anything but typical. I started out as a hairdresser, working across the UK for Toni & Guy and even aboard P&O cruises. In 2013, I joined my mum's business in older adult and social care and was hooked. I worked my way up to director and shareholder, helping run a company of around 115 people across Badenoch and Strathspey, supporting up to 75 vulnerable people and their families. It taught me an enormous amount about resilience, finance and HR.

Then COVID arrived. Like so many in the sector, we faced huge pressures, and in 2022 the business went into administration. It remains one of the hardest chapters of my career, and it taught me more about resilience than any qualification could. I later worked in health care again before moving into energy for three years.

Every experience reinforced the same belief: great HR is never one size fits all, and the right people decisions protect both the business and the people within it. There are people behind every decision, and you have to bring them with you. It should never feel like things are being done to people. It should be done with them, even in the complicated moments.



Libby MacDonald,
We Are Thryve.

My advice is commercially realistic and practical, with no time for corporate jargon no one reads. Businesses need support that works on a Monday morning, not something that makes life harder.

Today I work across health care, energy, hospitality, retail, and ports and harbours. I take time to learn your industry so the advice fits where you are. Whether it is untangling a tricky employee situation, building a handbook from scratch or acting as your outsourced HR partner, my job is to make the complicated feel manageable.

There is a bigger vision behind the business too. Thryve is a new platform that builds on your own systems to bring policies and handbooks to life, allowing teams to ask questions and get answers drawn directly from their policies within a safe, closed AI loop. Accessibility sits at its core and, as a dyslexic founder, that is personal to me. It is built to be usable for everyone by design, not as an afterthought.

I am incredibly proud that We Are Thryve was shortlisted by Inverness Chamber of Commerce as a finalist for Most Promising Business 2026, and for the Start-Up Business Award at the Women's Enterprise Scotland Awards.

Being part of Inverness Chamber of Commerce has opened doors and conversations that simply would not have happened otherwise. I always enjoy the variety of events and the connections they lead to. I firmly believe businesses grow best when they grow together.

Calman Trust Joins New Start Highland

Leading social enterprise New Start Highland has welcomed one of the region's longest-standing charities, Calman Trust, into its organisation.

This move has secured Calman's future and ensured the continuation of its valued support for young people across the Highlands. It marks a significant milestone for both organisations and represents a new model of collaboration within Scotland's third sector at a time when many charities face increasing financial pressures and funding uncertainty.

James Dunbar, Chief Executive of New Start Highland, said, "Calman Trust has been at the forefront of supporting young people in the Highlands for more than 28 years, delivering life-changing opportunities and experiences. As organisations, we have grown alongside one another, sharing a commitment to helping our communities thrive.

"By bringing our strengths together, we can build on that success and create a more sustainable future for young people in the region. We are proud to be Calman's partner of choice, and I look forward to working closely with the team as we begin this exciting new chapter together."

Andrew Nixseaman, Chair of Calman Enterprise, said, "Having been part of Calman Trust's journey for many years, I am incredibly proud of what we have achieved alongside the young people and communities we serve. This decision has been guided by one overriding priority which is to secure the strongest possible future for those young people. We are delighted to join the New Start Highland Family.

"New Start Highland shares our values, our passion and our commitment to making a difference. By bringing our organisations together, we can protect and strengthen the services that matter most, while creating new opportunities for future generations. I am excited about what we can achieve together and confident that this partnership will build on the legacy of Calman Trust for many years to come."

Founded over 26 years ago, New Start Highland has built a reputation for combining successful commercial enterprises with charitable impact,

reinvesting profits into services that tackle poverty, social isolation and inequality across the Highlands. The acquisition of Calman Trust will create new opportunities to strengthen services, share expertise and maximise social impact.

Calman Trust's services will remain unchanged, with Café Artysans still operating as usual in Inverness City Centre. New Start Highland will oversee Calman's daily operations from its base in Carsegate, Inverness, where it recently opened Scotland's first Training and Reuse Village.

Home to The Yard Café and Training Kitchen, the Village most recently welcomed electrical social enterprise ILM Highland, enabling the organisation to open its first retail outlet in Inverness.



Andrew Nixseaman, Chair of Calman Enterprises, Maggie Fraser, Chief Exec of Calman, and James Dunbar, Chief Exec of New Start Highland.



Balfour Beatty

Having grown up in the Highlands, it is particularly rewarding for Kirsten Sadler to take on her new role as Energy Account Director at Balfour Beatty. With a strong pipeline of energy infrastructure projects across Scotland and the wider UK, Kirsten is excited to support customers and partners in delivering the critical networks needed for the future.

The Highlands have always been close to her heart, and Kirsten is proud to contribute to a sector that is creating investment, opportunities and long-term benefits for local communities. She looks forward to strengthening relationships and supporting sustainable growth across the region.

Kirsten Sadler,
Energy Account
Director at
Balfour Beatty.



Stuart Dorber – Technical Support Engineer, sfG Software Ltd.

We are delighted to welcome Stuart Dorber to our team as Technical Support Engineer. Bringing a wealth of experience in backup solutions and helpdesk support, Stuart joins us with a strong track record of delivering excellent results and supporting customers and colleagues alike. Their expertise, enthusiasm, and fresh perspective will be a valuable addition to the business as we continue to grow and develop our services. We look forward to seeing the positive impact Stuart will make and wish them every success in their new role.



Stuart Dorber, Technical Support Engineer,
sfG Software Ltd.

Alison Wilson was appointed Managing Director of Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport (ICFGF) in July, after stepping into the role on an interim basis in June.

Alison joined ICFGF as Investment and Development Manager in March 2025 with more than 30 years' experience in economic development, investment and partnership working across the Highlands, including senior roles with HIE and UHI. She is also Highland Chair of the IoD and a Director of New Start Highland.

Her focus at ICFGF is now firmly on delivery – working closely with partners to secure further investment and create more employment and opportunities for local businesses across the Highlands.



Alison Wilson, Managing Director of Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport.

Caledonia Dallas has strengthened its presence across the north of Scotland with two appointments.

Rhona Scott joins the independent insurance broking and risk management firm's Elgin operation following almost 15 years with NFU Mutual, where she gained extensive experience in customer service, compliance and office management. Rhona brings strong industry knowledge and local relationships to the team.

James Dawson has joined the Inverness team as Account Executive, specialising in farm, estate, agricultural vehicle fleet and high-net-worth insurance. Prior to entering insurance, James was in the Army, worked in rural land management and was a Director at the Perthshire Agricultural Society.



James Dawson and Rhona Scott join Caledonia Dallas.



Fiddes Plant & Crane Training expands with investment in new instructor

Fiddes Plant & Crane Training has announced an exciting period of growth with the appointment of new instructor, Martin Paton.

The investment reflects the company's confidence in the future of the Highland economy and the growing demand for high-quality plant and crane training as major projects continue to progress across the region.

Martin brings extensive industry experience, further strengthening Fiddes Plant & Crane Training's practical approach to delivering training. His appointment supports the company's commitment to investing in skilled people, increasing training capacity and ensuring customers receive instruction from professionals with real-world experience.

With demand for qualified operators growing, the business is focused on supporting new learners and experienced operators while meeting future workforce requirements across construction, lifting operations, plant hire and civil engineering sectors.

Stuart Fiddes, Managing Director, said, "We are delighted to welcome Martin to the team. His knowledge and practical understanding of the industry will be a real asset to our customers. We are investing in the business because we believe demand for training in the Highlands will continue to grow, and we want to ensure businesses can access the high-quality, local training they need."



Martin Paton.



Oil & Vinegar, Corporate Gift Collection.

Oil & Vinegar Inverness Launches Corporate Gifting Service

Oil & Vinegar Inverness has launched a new corporate gifting service, offering businesses a healthier and more distinctive alternative to traditional corporate and Christmas gifts.

The new service enables organisations to create bespoke gift packages featuring premium olive oils, vinegars and accompanying food products, with options for personalisation and bulk orders.

The launch includes *The Spanish Collection*, featuring Spanish Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Sherry Vinegar and traditional Spanish Picos. Corporate packages are available from £17.50 per gift, with discounts for larger orders.

While designed with the festive season in mind, the gifting service is also suitable for client appreciation, employee recognition, property completions, vehicle handovers and other corporate occasions throughout the year.

Businesses can personalise gifts with company messages and work with the Oil & Vinegar team to create bespoke combinations tailored to their requirements and budget. The new offering reflects growing demand for meaningful corporate gifts that are practical, high quality and support healthier lifestyles.

Oil & Vinegar Inverness is located on Union Street, Inverness. For more information, visit www.oilandvinegar.co.uk or call 01463 240073.



NatureProsperity's £800,000 bridge round already more than half funded

Inverness-based MAKAR and Highlands Rewilding at Bunloit, near Drumnadrochit, have moved more than halfway to an £800,000 bridge-funding target, as part of a wider £26 million fundraiser for NatureProsperity Ltd, the umbrella company built to meet the nature and housing emergencies head-on.

NatureProsperity brings together the two established Highland companies with two new ventures, in sustainable forestry and affordable timber housebuilding, aiming to scale all four to a level that can shift the dial on climate, biodiversity and housing.

The bridge phase gives existing Highlands Rewilding and MAKAR investors the chance to widen their stake across the group, ahead of a main fundraising phase targeting the remaining balance of the £26 million by the end of March 2027, in big-ticket investments of £1-10 million.

NatureProsperity founder Jeremy Leggett has previously led £17.6 million of equity fundraising for the two Highland companies.

Green Angel Ventures, the impact investor network, is supporting the bridge phase, offering its members the chance to invest from £5,000 through a dedicated syndicate.

Conversations with big-ticket investors, family offices and wealth managers are underway ahead of the main fundraising phase from October.

Read the full update at [NatureProsperity](https://natureprosperity.org).



NatureProsperity – Resilience Reserve,
South Bunloit, New Wood.

Board Vacancies at Port of Inverness

The Port of Inverness is looking to recruit up to three Trustees to join the board from 1 February 2027. In recent years, the Port has become one of the main Ports in the north for renewable energy projects. The Port's profile has been further enhanced with it being a founder member of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, one of two Green Freeports in Scotland.

Gary Campbell, 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, is placing the Port at the heart of the region's energy transition and resilience. We are looking for individuals who can help shape and direct the Port's vision for the future."

Ideally the interested candidates should have experience in one of the following sectors: financial management, maritime with an understanding of ports and the shipping industry being advantageous or alternatively a general strategic business background.

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

For further information go to www.portofinverness/thetrustees.



Solway Fisher, River Ness, Port & Kessock Bridge.



Jacobite Loch Ness Cruises (JLNC) was awarded Gold by world-leading sustainability accreditation partner, Green Tourism

Green Tourism assessed Jacobite Loch Ness Cruises against 15 sustainability criteria under the pillars of People, Places and Planet.

A Gold Green Tourism Award shows that JLNC works responsibly, ethically and sustainably; contributes to its community; reduces its impact on the environment; and is accessible and inclusive.

Of those that apply to Green Tourism, one-third achieve gold, one-third silver, and one-third bronze.

Alison Daun, Managing Director of JLNC, said, "We are thrilled to have been awarded a Gold Green Tourism Award again! Being a cruise

business, it can be challenging to meet the high sustainability standards we and Green Tourism strive for, so to be awarded Gold in our assessment is really satisfying and shows we are doing the right things."

Euan Haggart, Environment and Sustainability Assessor at Green Tourism, added, "JLNC has attained the Green Tourism Gold Award, recognising its commitment to running its business in a sustainable way. Not only does it have first class sustainable actions and projects in place, but the business is also looking ahead to identify further actions it can undertake to reinforce its already excellent approach to operating the business."



Alison Daun, MD, and Rana Fettes, Visitor Experience and Sustainability Manager, with the Gold Green Tourism Award.

Tulloch Homes unveils luxury new house collection overlooking the Moray Firth

Tulloch Homes has launched its new Executive Collection at Parks View in Inverness, introducing a limited number of luxury family homes with panoramic views across the city, the Moray Firth and the Black Isle.

The new release includes four and five-bedroom homes with more than 215 square metres of living space. Each home includes premium features like designer kitchens from reputable supplier Ashley Ann, solid oak finishes, double garages and walk-in wardrobes. Set within open green space, the development combines a tranquil setting with easy access to Inverness city centre.

The launch addresses growing demand for larger, high-specification family homes in the Highlands, with Tulloch Homes reporting strong early interest in the collection.

To showcase the new range, a five-bedroom Carnegie show home allows prospective buyers to experience the scale, craftsmanship and quality of the homes first-hand.

With prices starting from £595,000, the Executive Collection represents one of the most prestigious new home offerings currently available in Inverness.

For more information, visit Tulloch Homes Parks View.



Parks View – Carnegie kitchen.

Inverness Airport strengthens connections for the Highlands

Inverness Airport is enjoying a strong period for connectivity, with new and returning international links and an expanding charter flight programme creating opportunities for Highland businesses, residents and visitors.

The return of the Inverness–Dublin service, now with Aer Lingus Regional, operated by Emerald Airlines, has restored a direct connection with Ireland while providing access to Aer Lingus' transatlantic network.

Earlier this year, easyJet launched a new twice-weekly service between Inverness and Birmingham, strengthening connections between the Highlands and the West Midlands for both business and leisure travel.

Looking ahead, Lufthansa Group will launch a new Inverness–Frankfurt service for summer 2027, operated by Discover Airlines, connecting the Highlands directly with one of Europe's major aviation hubs and onward destinations across Europe and beyond.

Charter activity is also expanding. Murray Travel Holidays is offering direct flights from Inverness to Tenerife and Gran Canaria in 2027, alongside the return of its popular direct Lapland day trip in December 2026, following two successful trips in 2025.

Together, these developments strengthen Inverness Airport's role in supporting Highland tourism and helping businesses and communities connect with destinations and markets across the UK, Europe and beyond.



easyJet crew celebrate the inaugural Birmingham route departure from Inverness, 30 March 2026.

Welcome to new members

Adam Bell
Marketing
www.adamonads.com
07359 400088

Ar Gàradh CIC
Community Development and Environmental Services
www.argaradh.co.uk
07821 005766

Arthur J Gallagher Ltd
Insurance Brokers
www.ajg.com/uk
08006 123635

Ascot Lloyd
Financial Services
www.ascotlloyd.co.uk
03454 757500

BC Technologies LLP
IT Consultancy and Services
www.bc-technologies.co.uk
03308 001010

Centred (Scotland)
Charity
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Inverness Chamber of Commerce

At the Heart of Highland Business

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

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Got a business question? Start with us

We'll not only answer the question but you'll be helping us to represent you better

by Colin Marr, Chief Executive of Inverness Chamber of Commerce



At Inverness Chamber of Commerce we pride ourselves on being able to answer any business question that comes our way. No questions are too big or too small, too unusual or too mundane. If it affects a Highland business we'll find the answer.

In the past we've had questions ranging from "how do I export a wind turbine to Europe" to "how do I find a face painter for our office party". We answered both of these – along with a lot more "ordinary" questions in-between.

We won't always know ourselves, but through our hundreds of member businesses, our colleagues at other Highland Chambers, and our membership of Scottish and British Chambers of Commerce we will always track the answer down. If it's an international trade question we have experts here and also have access to international chambers and British diplomats throughout the globe.

But why are we so keen that you turn to us? Firstly, we're a membership organisation so our primary aim is to help our member businesses. So, we want to help you. But equally important your questions give us a real insight into the challenges that businesses are facing. And that knowledge helps us do our job better.

Because as well as helping businesses to network, and to find potential customers or suppliers, one of our main jobs is to advocate to local and national government to help make life easier for businesses so that the wider economy and our communities can flourish. And when we're doing that we want to make sure that

we are advocating for things that businesses want and need.

There's no point in us campaigning for the A9 to be upgraded if that's not what businesses want – although it still is so we'll keep campaigning.

Business taxation is a good example. Until the budget in late 2024 business taxation was never raised with us and never featured as a top ten issue in any survey. But that budget brought in huge rises in National Insurance Contributions for employers and has been followed by rises in Non-Domestic Rates for lots of businesses, and the possibility of the visitor levy for the accommodation sector. So, in the last two years business taxation has suddenly become a top three issue raised by our members and, as a result, we've changed some of our advocacy to work closely with Scottish and British Chambers to make sure that message is heard loud and clear at both Westminster and Holyrood.

One way that we stay on top of advocacy is through surveys. The Quarterly Economic Indicator (QEI), run by Scottish Chambers of Commerce, is Scotland's longest-running business survey. It provides vital insight into business conditions and helps shape the agenda for policymakers. It's shared with British Chambers, so your responses contribute to a bigger picture that feeds into Scottish and British Chambers' advocacy work – ensuring the realities facing Highland businesses are reflected at a national level. Its strength is in the consistency of the questions which allow it to track business sentiment.



But even more important for us is our own annual Business Insights Survey. We launched it at Spotlight in September and it's open until 30 November 2026. This one comes from us in Inverness and allows us to ask questions which are directly relevant to the Highlands. It played a big part in shaping our manifesto for the Scottish Elections this year, and the more responses we get the greater our credibility is when we're talking to policy makers. It's an opportunity for us to find out what matters most to you locally, from the challenges you're facing, to the opportunities you see ahead. So please click on the link below, take a few minutes to complete the survey and help us make sure Highland business is being heard. It also gives you the opportunity to raise any issues that you think we're missing, particularly ahead of local elections next year.

And that's where your business questions really add value as

well. You might not see them as policy but if we find out that lots of businesses are having difficulty with the same thing then that starts to build a picture of where a policy changes, or just a really good information campaign could help.

So next time you have a business question that you can't find the answer to please get in touch. We'll get you the answer for you and you'll be helping your Highland business colleagues at the same time. But in the meantime, please fill out our 2026 business insights survey here: <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/e/3g6KH7ArLX>



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