

## CNSRP Executive & Advisory Boards Meet



CNSRP Executive Board members (left to right): **Greg Allan**, Scottish Government; **Sandy Cumming**, Highlands & Islands Enterprise; **Sir Anthony Cleaver**, Independent Chairman; **Randall Bargelt**, Nuclear Decommissioning Authority; **Alistair Dodds**, Highland Council.

The Executive Board of the CNSRP met in early December 2008 to review progress with the Action Plan. Key items on the agenda were the development of a forward plan for engineering skills in the area, and the role of cultural development in our area. The draft minute of the meeting is available to view or download from the Partnership's website at the address below.

The Advisory Board had its second meeting in mid December, and reviewed its membership, as well as its role in

the Partnership. The members heard an update on progress with the prioritised Action Plan, as well as specific updates on the work of the Inward Investment Manager. There was agreement that the Advisory Board will now meet four times per year, and a full timetable of all Partnership meetings was published in February 2009. A draft minute of this meeting is also available to view or download from the Partnership website at the address below:

[www.cnsrp.org.uk/downloads](http://www.cnsrp.org.uk/downloads)

## North Highland Tourism

North Highland Tourism (NHT) was launched in 2006 as part of HRH The Prince Charles' North Highland Initiative. It brings together almost 170 tourism businesses in the north to help increase awareness of the area as a visitor destination, and to develop the area's tourism product. NHT held a successful tourism conference in Dornoch in October 2008.

Delegates from across the north heard about the success of the marketing campaign undertaken during 2008. The campaign, which cost in the region of £100,000 was funded by VisitScotland, HIE, members' subscriptions and private donations from HRH The Prince Charles Charitable Foundation. Some of the highlights of the campaign were:

- Media coverage estimated to be worth in excess of £180,000 reaching no fewer than 16.9 million people.
- Direct marketing reached 70,000 people through leaflets handed out at press and other events and to 'mature devotees' who are recognised as one of the most likely groups to visit the North Highlands.
- Brand relationships effectively established and relationships built with key media and partners.
- On-line advertising activity delivered nearly 4 million "page impressions" for the NHT website.
- 19 press releases were issued on

For further information  
[www.northhighlandsscotland.com](http://www.northhighlandsscotland.com)

a wide range of north Highland topics, and successfully placed into a number of magazines, newspapers and periodicals.

- A media event was held in London and over 40 'travel' journalists attended representing a broad range of publications.

Discussions with HIE and the NDA are underway on how they can play their part in helping NHT to grow into a sustainable company focussed on helping the area achieve the Scottish Government's tourism growth targets for 2015. NHT is also in discussion with VisitScotland on how the best use can be made of its new 'Growth Fund' to underpin a further marketing campaign for 2009 and beyond.

**Murray Lamont**, Chairman of NHT said "2008 was a year of considerable success for NHT in achieving and surpassing the main over-arching objective which was set by our members at the very start of this journey. This was to raise the awareness of the North Highlands as a place to visit. The Board of NHT is committed to continue this success in 2009 and beyond and with the help of our partners and agencies we are optimistic for the future".

## Mike McCartney's North Highlands

An exhibition of photographs of the north, taken by renowned photographer **Mike McCartney**, was launch in the Scottish Parliament in January.

The launch event was sponsored by **Jamie Stone MSP**, supported by **Michael Russell MSP**, and was organised by Caithness & North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership. Well-known faces such as **Sir Peter Maxwell Davis** and Scottish singer-songwriter **Sandi Thom** attended, along with numerous MSP's. A commercial publisher is now finalising a book of the photos, with specially-written contributions from **HRH The Prince Charles**, **Billy Connolly** and **Michael Russell MSP**.

**Eann Sinclair**, the Partnership's Programme Manager, said "This was a good opportunity to have our voice heard in the Parliament, and we're very grateful to MSP's **Jamie Stone** and **Michael Russell** for allowing that

Jamie Stone MSP, singer Sandi Thom, Mike McCartney and Michael Russell MSP at the launch event



to happen. The launch event attracted great interest within the Parliament and amongst the media - Mike McCartney's photos offered a different, more contemporary view of our area that chimed well with the economic transition message we wanted to get across. I was able to pass on information on local issues to a number of MSP's, and I hope we can continue to raise awareness of our area over the coming months."

# Caithness & North Sutherland REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP



Issue 2- March 2009

# Caithness Regeneration CONFERENCE

Caithness can rule the waves! – that was the message from **First Minister Alex Salmond** when he attended the Caithness Regeneration Conference on 29th September last year.

Over 150 delegates attended the conference to hear about the progress being made by the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership as well as the ambitious plans for the future of Scrabster Harbour.



Speaking after the conference **John Thurso, MP** said "I can see and feel a growing sense of confidence that we can meet the challenges and that our goal of creating a successful, modern, mixed economy is achievable. It will only happen if we move forward together and show a united Caithness front in meeting our objectives."



## Caithness & North Sutherland REGENERATION PARTNERSHIP

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[www.cnsrp.org.uk](http://www.cnsrp.org.uk)



## Potential of Pentland Firth moves a step forward

The Crown Estate has announced that the first stage of the process to allocate sites for wave and tidal renewable energy in the Pentland Firth strategic area is complete. Developers' response to this first invitation has been very positive and 38 individual companies and consortia have been invited to tender following confirmation of their interest by registering for the pre-qualification process.

**Rob Hastings**, Director of the Marine Estate at The Crown Estate, said: "We are very pleased by the excellent response to this first UK commercial marine energy development opportunity.

Scotland has some of the best natural wave and tidal resources in Europe and the Pentland Firth strategic area has been selected with this in mind."

The Scottish Government, which will decide upon planning applications in due course, also welcomed the positive response. First Minister **Alex Salmond** commented: "The fact that so many companies have already registered their interest in developing wave and tidal energy projects in the Pentland Firth and surrounding waters is extremely encouraging.

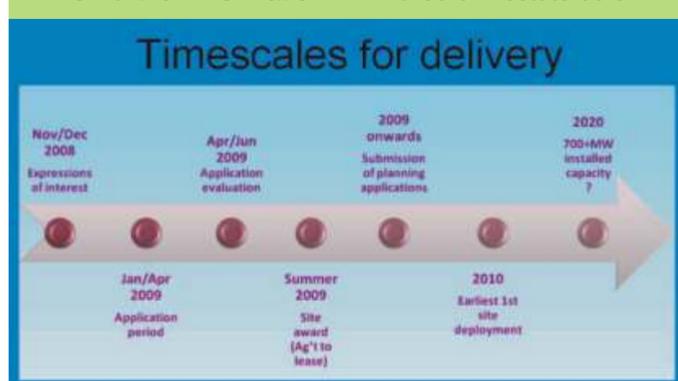
"The Scottish Government has recently launched the world's

greatest ever single prize for innovation in marine energy, the £10 million Saltire Prize, and the opening of the Pentland Firth for development is a timely and crucial move."

Scottish Secretary **Jim Murphy** said: "This is a very welcome development. The UK Government is working hard alongside the Scottish Government to ensure that the huge potential in Scottish waters for renewable energy can be realised, and to ensure electricity generated from marine energy technologies plays an important role in the UK's efforts to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change."

**Sandy Cumming**, chief executive of Highland and Islands Enterprise, said: "We want the Highlands and Islands to lead the way in marine energy development and to get this level

For further information: [www.thecrownestate.co.uk](http://www.thecrownestate.co.uk)



of developer interest in the Pentland Firth at this stage is an important step towards that objective."

**Roger Bright**, Chief Executive of The Crown Estate, commented: "The Crown Estate is committed to working to ensure that the growing renewable energy sector is given every opportunity to succeed. It will be several months

before we have a clear idea of the number of companies likely to progress to site survey and application but this is an excellent start."

The next stage in the process involves a formal application process open to those who have pre-qualified. Applications will have to be completed and submitted during May 2009.

## "Caithness & North Sutherland Action Plan" prioritised

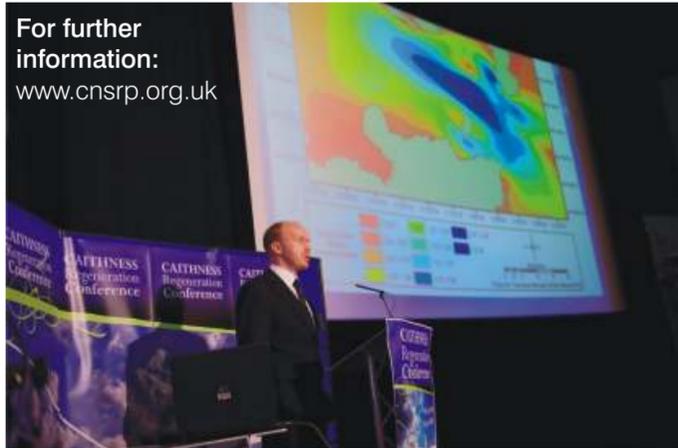
At the Caithness Regeneration Conference on 30th September this year we showed for the first time a prioritised version of our Action Plan, featuring 9 high priority actions to be pursued.

These can be summarised as follows:

- Scrabster Harbour
- Wick Harbour
- Pentland Firth Tidal Energy
- Engineering
- John O' Groats
- Food & Drink
- Inward Investment
- IT Connectivity
- Transport links

**Eann Sinclair**, Programme Manager for the Regeneration Partnership, said "The prioritised action plan is at an early stage, but there is a need for us to move on with the delivery of projects. Our top priorities are

For further information: [www.cnsrp.org.uk](http://www.cnsrp.org.uk)



featured on the Partnership's new website and we are asking for feedback on whether people feel these are the right projects to be targeting. Some of these projects (such as transport or IT connectivity) will be "enablers" for future economic activities, whilst others (such as John O' Groats, food & drink) are likely to be direct business drivers in our economy. The plan will continue to evolve - and particularly in the current climate we will need to ensure we reflect current business needs - but it is crucial that we concentrate on the high priority projects."

## Caithness Horizons has Busy Opening Month

Over 12,000 visits were recorded by staff at the Caithness Horizons centre in the five weeks following its opening on 1st December 2008.

The former Town Hall and Carnegie Library buildings have undergone a multi-million pound face-lift, with financial support from a range of bodies such as The Highland Council, The Heritage Lottery Fund, UKAEA, NDA and Highlands & Islands Enterprise. The Caithness public have been voting with their feet during its first few weeks of operation. Centre Manager **Beki Pope** admitted "we're really delighted not only with the number of visitors, but also with the very

positive feedback we have been getting from people of all ages."

The complex now provides employment for 12 staff, and will remain open all year round, providing exhibition, café, gallery and meeting space. Most recently the Caithness Family History Society has established a presence in the building, allowing the public to access genealogical information on the local area.

For further information: [www.caithnesshorizons.co.uk](http://www.caithnesshorizons.co.uk)



Paul Cariss at opening ceremony

## Mey Selections in Gastro-pub Deal

**North Highland Products (NHP)** has secured a deal to supply "gourmet burgers" to a chain of gastro-pubs in England. Ember Inns run a network of "real ale pubs" throughout England, Wales and Scotland. They have chosen to use beef from the Mey Selections brand for their gourmet burgers.

**Oliver Devine**, Marketing Manager with Ember Inns, said: "Many gourmet products attract premium prices, but that needn't be the case. At Ember Inns we are offering gourmet burgers for as little as £5.95"

**Danny Miller**, Chairman of North Highland Products, said "The partnership with Ember Inns helps to support small farmers and producers offering food unequalled in provenance and taste. Our beef has won more than one national award, and some of the top chefs in London will use nothing else. By supplying a great quality product Ember Inns is playing its part in ensuring that our local farming community remains sustainable."

NHP joined forces with "sister" company North Highland Tourism in a promotional campaign targeted at the customers of the Sainsbury supermarket chain across the UK. The promotion will take the form of an on-pack consumer promotion over a period of 4 - 6 weeks (February - March 2009) which will appear on approx. 500,000 Sainsbury 'Taste the Difference' and 'Mey Selections' brands. Sainsbury attract 17 million customers to their stores every week and sell 6 million packs of Mey Selections ready-meals every year. This promotion will feature prizes of two-day breaks for two in hotels that are members of NHT. A similar promotion is being considered by NHT with a company who run a chain of 'gastro-pubs' in England and who sell 1.5 million Mey Selection Gourmet Burgers every year.



For further information: [www.mey-selections.com/04\\_press.html](http://www.mey-selections.com/04_press.html)

## Local Projects are Awarded Highland Legacy Funding

Fourteen local cultural projects were awarded funding in round 1 of the Highland Council's "Highland 2007 Legacy" programme.

Four projects in north Sutherland and nine in Caithness have benefited from the programme, which has since been renamed the "Highland Culture Programme". It is hoped that these projects will bring local benefit from the "Homecoming Scotland 2009" initiative promoted by The Scottish Government. Projects approved include a second Wick Harbourfest, Caithness Science Festival and Caithness Country Music Festival as well as a gaelic arts project at Taigh na Gaidhlig Mhealanais and projects promoted by the Mackay Country Community Trust and Durness Development Group.

Announcing the continuation of the £500,000 Programme

For further information: [www.highland2007.com](http://www.highland2007.com)

with two funding rounds in February and August each year Councillor **Sandy Park**, Convener of The Highland Council, said: "The volume and high quality of applications combined to present the decision making panel with an exciting challenge. Many excellent applications were received and the overall quality of the submissions reflects the wealth and breadth of cultural activity happening in the Highlands all year round.

"The projects and events vary widely in scale, from local projects involving entire communities to major events bringing significant economic benefit to the area. Many of the successful projects build on those initiated for Highland 2007, Scotland's year of Highland culture."

## Thurso Precinct Work Accelerated

The Highland Council has agreed to accelerate its spending on the facelift of Thurso pedestrian precinct to complete the £300,000 project by Easter 2009.

The six-week first phase of the reconstruction of the pedestrian-friendly area was completed at the end of 2008. It saw an upgrade of the area between Market Street and the Town Hall Square. A second 10-week phase started in January 2009 to complete the upgrade from the Town Hall to the trunk road at the junction of Trail Street – Olig Street.

The Council agreed to bring forward the spending from the 2009/10 budget to ensure the contract was completed in one project. The works include replacement of the existing concrete paviers with Caithness flagstone outside the shops and reconstruction of the access road to the shops edged with coloured paviers. New street furniture is being installed to replace old benches and the existing street lighting columns, planters and bins will all be refreshed.

The work is being carried out by John Gunn & Sons Ltd, Lybster. It has been jointly funded by The Highland Council's Transport Environment and Community Service and Planning and Development Service through



their programme for economic regeneration.

**Councillor John Rosie**, member for Thurso, said he was delighted that the pedestrian precinct was being given a timely facelift: "This is really good news for the people of Thurso. We have followed the wishes of the local community by completing this work in one project at a time that causes the least disruption to shoppers and shopkeepers. The upgrade will complement the refurbishment of the Town Hall and will undoubtedly help reinvigorate this important area of Thurso."

For further information:

[www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/6075/](http://www.johnogroat-journal.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/6075/)

## Wick High School Funding Announced

Plans for a £1 million upgrade of Wick High School have been unveiled to staff and parent representatives.

It is hoped that work can start during the summer following a competitive tendering process on a 25-week contract to extend the dining facilities and upgrade and extend the gymnasium changing facilities. It is also proposed to upgrade staff and pupil toilets.

Discussions are to continue with the Parent Council and school management over the future use of the school

swimming pool, which has been unused for the past year because of health and safety issues. A proposal to convert the pool hall and plant area into a dance/drama studio and cardio vascular fitness suite and refurbish the staff base will be the subject of a feasibility study. In further phases of upgrading, the Council will examine the upgrade of science laboratories and home economics rooms.

## Mathew is the "Rolls-Royce" of Apprentices in Scotland

**Mathew Mackay** from Watten has won the coveted title of Scottish Modern Apprentice of the Year 2008 at a ceremony in Edinburgh.

Modern Apprenticeships offer those over the age of 16 paid employment combined with the opportunity to train for jobs at craft, technician and management level.

Mathew (20) joined the Rolls-Royce Modern Apprenticeship scheme at Vulcan in 2004 from Wick High School as an Instrumentation Apprentice.

During his first year, Mathew gained his National Certificate and Scottish Vocational Qualification (SVQ) Level 2 in Engineering. In years two and three, he gained his HND and SVQ Level 3 in Engineering, effectively completing his modern apprenticeship in just over three years. He then became the youngest ever Rolls-Royce employee to successfully complete the Nuclear Technical Personnel Course at HMS Sultan in Gosport, before taking up the position as Instrument Technician in November 2007.

At the ceremony, Mathew won in his own category of Apprentice of the Year Traditional Section (age 16-19) and then the overall award of the evening, across all categories, to crown him Scottish



Apprentice of the Year.

**John Owens**, HR Manager at Rolls-Royce said "These awards represent a great achievement for Mathew who has been a dedicated and enthusiastic apprentice. It is very pleasing to see all his hard work rewarded. This national recognition also reflects well on our Rolls-Royce apprenticeship in Caithness led by **Lesley Steven**, our internal verifier, **Sandy Bennie**, our internal assessors and apprentice workplace supervisors."

Mathew said "I am very grateful to all those who have supported me during my apprenticeship and contributed towards me winning. It was a great thrill to go to Edinburgh and come back to Caithness with two awards."

## Hie Course Encourages New Business Venture For Mairi Anne

After attending a HIE business start up course run by Development Partners Dounreay worker **Mairi Anne Fraser** took the bit between her teeth and has now started her own business.

She has set up a small livery yard and a website supplying quality equestrian products locally and nationally.

"I had a few plans to start my own business and had been undertaking some market research when I heard about this course," she says. "It was absolutely brilliant. I probably learned more in three days there than in my four years on a business studies degree! As a result I have pushed on with my business, completing my

stables in John O'Groats and setting up my website."

"Initially I intend to keep my day job and run the business in my spare time. As part of this long-term plan, I have moved to working a four-day week. I would encourage anyone who is considering starting their own business to have a look at what courses such as these can offer you."

For further information:  
[www.horseshorses.co.uk](http://www.horseshorses.co.uk)

## Scrabster Harbour Trust and HIE prepare for new markets



Aerial view of harbour area

For further information:  
<http://www.scrabster.co.uk/news/?id=286>

A new industrial park is being planned as part of the expansion at Scrabster Harbour to capitalise on a clutch of exciting new opportunities.

Scrabster Harbour Trust and HIE are working together to realise the ambitious plans for further expansion of the port to ensure it becomes one of the lynchpins of the push to diversify the north economy.

Scrabster Harbour Trust had previously announced plans to modernise the existing oil tanker berth and to build a new deepwater quay. It will also create a 30 acre industrial park to exploit the Port's proximity to the oil and gas fields in the Atlantic Frontier and to the tidal energy sites in the Pentland Firth. The Trust's plans are aimed at doubling the port's impact on the local economy.

## Appointment of inward investment manager

**Fiona MacPherson**, a lawyer with extensive international experience in various sectors, has been appointed to the post of inward investment manager with the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership.



Fiona, who has Caithness connections, has returned to Scotland to take up the two-year contract after spending 20 years working in the USA, latterly with Scottish Development International.

Since starting work in September 2008 Fiona has been working on

a series of leads in the energy and engineering sectors. Whilst many are still at an early stage some - like the proposal to build a marine-powered Data Centre in Caithness - are now moving ahead.

For further information

[www.hie.co.uk/default.aspx.locid=0fnewlyl.RefLocID=0fihiesvf003.Lang=EN.htm](http://www.hie.co.uk/default.aspx.locid=0fnewlyl.RefLocID=0fihiesvf003.Lang=EN.htm)

## LEADER in Caithness

European funding from the LEADER Programme of more than £900,000 is available over the next three years in Caithness for community groups and local projects in

Caithness.

To qualify for funds projects must fit with the Caithness LEADER Plan and the following themes:

- Development planning and community capacity building
- Culture and heritage
- Training and learning
- Access to activities facilities and services
- Land, environment and access to the countryside

## World's First Tidal-powered data centre could be built in Caithness

Singapore-based tidal turbine developer **Atlantis Resources Corporation** has formed a partnership with Scottish-based data centre specialist **Internet Villages International** to build a data centre powered by energy from the Pentland Firth. A site near Mey has been identified for the development.

Atlantis is seeking sea-bed leases to enable it to generate power from its own tidal technology, which it has been testing in Australia for a number of years. It would use this generated power to supply an initial 30 megawatts of power to the centre by 2011, and a further 120 mega watts by 2013 if its plans work. The initial predictions are for up to 100 jobs to be created within the next three

years.

Data centres are facilities used to house computer storage systems, and huge companies such as Microsoft, Google etc have led the development of the current generation of facilities. These data centres are known to be very high users of power, and are therefore of interest in the development of the tidal industry around the Pentland Firth.

For further information:

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands\\_and\\_islands/7852889.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/highlands_and_islands/7852889.stm)

- Renewables
- Tourism
- Social enterprises and microbusinesses

How the Caithness allocation will be spent is determined by a sub group of Caithness Partnership, the LEADER Implementation Group (LIG). The Caithness LIG has already made 5 awards and a total of £121,527 has been allocated to the following organisations:

Caithness Archaeological Trust

(£45,396) for the Caithness Broch Centre in Auckengill; **Dunbeath Heritage Centre** (£13,198) for a project which will preserve, conserve and interpret the fishing heritage of the village; **Lyth Arts Centre** (£19,666) for A Sinclair Odyssey, a community arts programme focused on local heritage; **Highland Council** (£11,484) for a National Theatre "Transform" project based in Thurso; and **Caithness Voluntary Groups** (£31,783) for a three year project delivering training and mentoring support to voluntary groups in the county.

## North Highland Regeneration Fund goes from strength to strength

Small businesses and young companies often find it difficult to raise money to fund growth, and in the current economic climate this has been brought sharply into focus.

The North Highland Regeneration Fund (NHRF) was established by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) to provide loan funding that would complement other existing sources of funding for small businesses. The scheme is designed to pump-prime both the start-up of new ventures and the growth of existing businesses. Neil Robertson of NHRF confirms that since its launch in 2006 the Fund has held discussions with 79 companies/individuals and this has resulted in loans of £717,000 being awarded to assist 17 different companies. Over the term of these loans this is projected to secure 133 jobs and create a further 81.

The Fund has recently seen one of its assisted companies go into liquidation - a reminder of the extremely difficult economic conditions currently faced by businesses. A further 13 companies are in the process of being evaluated for loans with a projected value of £445,000. NHRF estimates that this will help secure a further 35 existing jobs with a further potential for the creation of 43 new jobs. The NDA has so far provided a total of £1M in funding for the scheme.

During the current economic crisis the NHRF is working with Highland Opportunity and HIE to help local businesses, and is in discussion with Scottish Enterprise regarding links to its "Seed Fund".

For further information:  
[www.nhrf.co.uk](http://www.nhrf.co.uk)

## Dounreay site looks at potential spin out businesses

Services currently provided in-house by Dounreay Site Restoration Ltd (DSRL) have the potential to prosper as stand-alone businesses beyond the site's closure date.

Potential "spin-outs" identified so far include the non-nuclear analytical laboratories, the training department and the occupational health department. DSRL is working closely with HIE and other key organisations to investigate the commercial potential for these areas.

## HISEZ to lead on developing social enterprises in Highlands & Islands

A three year contract to develop and promote social enterprises in the Highlands and Islands has been won by The Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone Community Interest Company (HISEZ CIC). The contract will help deliver the Scottish Government's new

strategy – "Better business: a strategy and action plan for social enterprise in Scotland."



## Caithness Chamber of Commerce

The rejuvenation of the Caithness Chamber of Commerce has been boosted by the appointment of **Trudy Morris** as its first Chief Executive. Trudy has had extensive experience in a range of managerial roles: she is commercially-focused with extensive knowledge and experience within manufacturing industries. She also brings experience in the provision of commercial services in international, corporate and owner-managed business environments.



During the recruitment process local businessmen **Peter Body** and **Stephen Sutherland** carried out the roles of interim Chair and Vice-Chair respectively.

Peter said "We are delighted to have secured someone of Trudy's calibre for this post. This is just the start of the process where we hope to see the Chamber becoming stronger, with all local businesses working together to ensure a vibrant future for the area."

One of Trudy's first jobs will be to increase the membership of the Chamber to ensure that every aspect of business life in Caithness is represented.

She added "I have been taking a keen interest in the work that is already going on in the area to diversify businesses away from dependency on Dounreay. There

For further information:  
[www.caithnesschamber.com](http://www.caithnesschamber.com)

are exciting prospects for the future in areas such as marine renewables, engineering and tourism, so it is good to see a strong partnership team working together to achieve a successful outcome. I look forward to working with the key agencies to help achieve their goals."

Highlands and Islands Enterprise was instrumental in securing the post with funding of £150,000 over a three-year period. DSRL is also providing support with administrative services. **Annemarie Monteforte** of Highlands and Islands Enterprise said "HIE recognises the need for a strong business focus for the Caithness area and therefore we were delighted to be able to offer assistance to the Chamber. HIE, along with the other key agencies in the Caithness and North Sutherland Regeneration Partnership, looks forward to working closely with the Chamber in the future."

## Support shown for Developing Decommissioning Supply Chain

Almost 100 representatives from the "decommissioning supply chain" (the name given to the range of businesses whose activities help decommission the NDA's nuclear sites) have shown a commitment to helping the NDA shape its proposed Supply Chain Development Strategy.

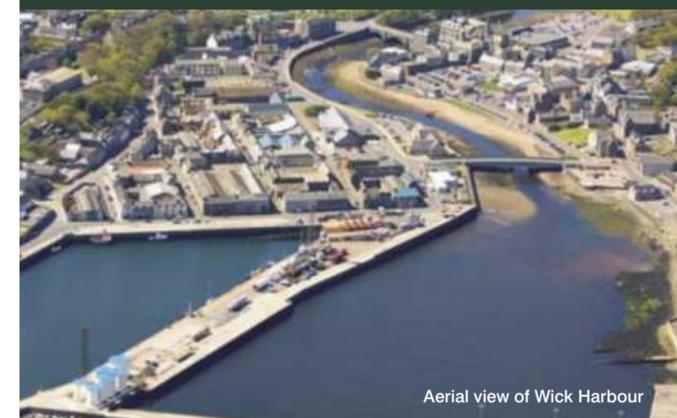
During the development of the Strategy workshops were run by an external facilitator and used an electronic voting system to obtain some quantitative data on a number of questions raised in the

NDA's draft document. The workshops then saw lively discussion on a number of issues including barriers affecting businesses entering into the decommissioning marketplace.



For further information:  
[www.nda.gov.uk/stakeholders/newsletter/supply-chain-development-support.cfm](http://www.nda.gov.uk/stakeholders/newsletter/supply-chain-development-support.cfm)

## Development of Wick Marina



Aerial view of Wick Harbour

**Wick** received a major confidence boost late last year following news that a £576,000 funding package had been secured to install a marina development in the town's harbour.

Delivering the funding package required complex negotiations between the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) which is providing the vital funding conduit. The Crown Estate has also provided significant

financial support to the project's applicants, Wick Harbour Authority.

For further information:  
[www.wickharbour.co.uk/newsletters/Newsletter\\_2A.pdf](http://www.wickharbour.co.uk/newsletters/Newsletter_2A.pdf)

## Nuclear Bursary programme offers up to £4,000

The National Skills Academy for Nuclear in partnership with the NDA and Serco have rolled out a second round of Bursary awards.

The scheme is aimed at quality individuals on programmes of study relevant to the nuclear industry, and includes foundation degrees, honours degrees and master degrees.

The programme provides financial support to students and aims to attract a broader mix of

new entrants into the nuclear industry and wider science and technology agenda, leading to increased diversity and opportunity. Of the 26 students successful in their Bursary application in May 2008, 8 came from Scotland with 7 of those from Caithness.



For further information:  
[www.nuclear.nsacademy.co.uk](http://www.nuclear.nsacademy.co.uk)

## HIE launches free business advice line

As the economic climate worsened in early January Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) launched a campaign to assist businesses to navigate their way through the downturn.

The agency set up a dedicated advice line on **08000 884 884** with business experts offering free tailored advice to businesses of any size and in any sector. Callers can also get contact details of other agencies such as HM Revenue and Customs or Scottish Development International. The line may be able to assist them with particular issues, or help them go on to book a free one-to-one consultation with a business adviser. HIE's campaign includes advertisements in local newspapers and on local radio, as well as direct mail to businesses in our area. A dedicated website has also been set up.

**Carroll Buxton**, one of HIE's Regional Directors said "This is a time when businesses need to be taking a strong hold of their business plans, ensuring that they have a strategy fit for current trading conditions and that they are pursuing every viable opportunity. HIE can help with this and I would urge anyone who thinks their business could benefit from advice at this time, to get in touch with us."

The advice line is available from 8am until 6pm on weekdays and from 9am until 1pm on Saturday mornings. It is free to call from BT landlines but, as usual, mobile phone users may be charged by their service providers.

For further information:  
[www.hiebusiness.co.uk](http://www.hiebusiness.co.uk) or freephone 08000 884 884