

NICE Chairman's Report 2016-2017

I would like to start off by quoting Marion Francis the outside management consultant who was engaged using DTAS investment to take the town centre charrette forward.

"I have worked in lots of communities in the central belt we would give our eye teeth at the turn out you have here and the energy, enthusiasm, engagement and support.

You are in such a strong position. The whole political tenor of the moment is to transfer money to be invested in communities. That's exactly what the BID is about.

The message tonight to Nairn as a community is to grasp this with both hands. There is a really positive future"

The clear message from all sources now is that Nairnshire is a great place to invest. This applies to public, private and charitable sources of investment. It also applies to local volunteers adding their voice, work and experience

How have we managed to bring about this change in culture and understanding? We have listened to all the outside and local organisations asking Nairnshire to speak with one voice. We have worked closely with Highland Council, HIE, BID Scotland, Ryden, DTAS, HISEZ, ANB, NRCG, NEI, Visit Nairn to develop a framework and delivery systems to make our vision come to fruition.

NICE has majored on this enabling role. Once all else in place we can really start to deliver

This has meant a lot of hard work by the NICE directors and NICE members. I would like to thank them all for their support and hard work. In listing, all the positives below, I would stress they are the result of true partnership working. This has been our priority as directors this year as we (all in Nairnshire) have wasted too much time talking for no return in the past.

Positive steps forward in last year.

NAIRNSHIRE COMMITTEE

Nairnshire Committee under the Chairmanship of Michael Green have given a much-needed locality focus. Local ward manager Liz Cowie has been very supportive and helpful. We need a well-functioning Nairnshire Committee giving strong local leadership and scrutiny. They also must work together in the best interests of Nairnshire

NAIRNSHIRE COMMUNITY COUNCILS

The Nairnshire Community Councils with real support from Loreine Thomson and Brian Stewart are looking at the Scottish Government and Highland Council new approaches to Community empowerment and locality planning. This all builds on the work Dick Youngson and Tommy Hogg have put in over the years. This joining up of spatial and locality planning will deliver a New Nairnshire Plan. It will act as a model for Rory Mair's work on improving Local Democracy.

This means more local accountability and responsibility for the Community Councils.

Rory Mair's target for a successful outcome would be an 80% turnout for local elections for Council and CC elections. A real sign of community participation.

All these positive changes will allow a better understanding of DATA for all local services, education, health, social care, roads, sewage, recreation and leisure, environment etc. It will build on Scottish Government Policy of good planning, good design, good build and good maintenance. For example, a well-maintained town centre with good gardening and

maintenance squads. This will allow volunteers to work alongside these professional teams.

It will also mean Fair Share Budgets for Nairnshire for all services including using Integrated Resource Framework for Health and Social Care.

This will all provide many better local jobs in Nairnshire

BID

Exciting news on the BID front. Rydens who carried out the Town centre Charrette saw the potential of the sleeping giant - called Nairnshire. This was also identified by the Prince's Foundation several years ago. Rydens contacted Ian Davidson Porter at BID Scotland who asked NICE to develop a BID project for Nairnshire. NICE have been working with Michael Boylan from ANB and Michael Green as Chair of Nairnshire Committee and we are very pleased to announce that we have been successful in this first stage of the BID process. We have obtained the necessary funding from Highland Council, HIE and BID Scotland. We have a very good response to the Project Managers advert and hope to have the BID project manager appointed in April.

This will start work towards a vote of all the business sector people before the BID can go live.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

NICE as the social enterprise has now done a lot of the spade work. As we move forward in this partnership model we will start to deliver our essential enabling role in accessing the charitable sector capacity and finance. We are looking for new Directors. If you feel you can offer the necessary skills, time and above all enthusiasm please contact our secretary Mike Barnett or myself by e-mail, in writing or in person.

COMMON GOOD

Last but by no means least we have been working with Bill Young, Brian Stewart and Loreine Thomson on the Nairnshire Common Good and all its considerable assets. Once again having Michael Green, Liz Cowie and the other Nairnshire Councillor's working on this has seen the start of what I think will be a very exciting and positive way forward.

I like the idea of us all working in the best interest of Nairnshire's Common Good and making best use of all our Common Good assets. NICE is very willing to play its full part in this exciting future.

Projects, we as NICE have been involved in include:

TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT

Town centre - wide support for charrette outcome. Wide-spread support for an attractive town centre with the old social work building as a key gateway, tourism/visitor centre, good toilets and other local uses if identified and needed. We are working with HC, ANB, HIE and BID to take this forward. Marion Francis with DTAS support have worked with HC and ANB to plan a deliverable way forward

HARBOUR

Harbour -The Harbour Group have come up with an exciting range of proposals. Matthew Hilton and Brian Stewart have been members of this group. The proposals are now going out for consultation and NICE are working with the Harbour Group to consult and then deliver. This builds on all the early NICE meetings in the sailing Club. It also builds on Graham Kerr and Sheena Munro's work.

I would like to pay tribute to Graham for all his hard work and enthusiasm. He is sorely missed.

I would also like to thank both Sheena Munro and Rosemary Young for all their work and support.

MEN'S SHED

The Men's Shed has premises in the Railway Station and will be up and working soon. Mike has supported them in a secretarial and business advisory role. NICE's enabling role working well.

BATHING WATER QUALITY

NICE have been involved in this group with Scottish Water, SEPA, SNH and Highland Council. It is vital for Nairnshire's tourist industry that we get this sorted. Again, we are supporting partnership working and showing the benefit of this combined and integrated approach.

This work obviously overlaps with the harbour work and the real flood risk to Fishertown.

BYPASS and A96 PROPOSALS.

Again, NICE has been involved in these discussions. It is vital that we get this bypass built.

Joan has been our transport expert and has contributed a lot to these vital safety issues.

It is also very important around the town centre plans and building an attractive town to live and work in as well as a tourist town.

KEEPING NAIRNSHIRE COLOURFUL

We have been supporting Annie, Des and Dick as we try to find the right solution to keeping the county looking its best. This also means looking at maintenance of paths -both old and new

WETLANDS

We continue to work with Dick to deliver what we believe could be a very valuable contribution to Nairnshire's all year tourist trade.

LIDO

Good news on the Lido front where the HIE feasibility study is positive, Iain Fairweather has worked with Iain Bruce to help move this project forward.

Alastair Noble

Chair of NICE

March 2017