

## **NICE Chairman's Annual Report**

### **Why NICE and what does NICE do?**

Well, a simple answer might be if we did not have NICE, we would have to set up a properly constituted Community Enterprise/Body. Thanks to all the diligent work of our Director's we have all the right bits of paper to fulfil all these statutory and governance roles. Since merging and supporting Team Hamish with NICE we have a membership into the thousands. We therefore are the body within Nairnshire to take forward Local Place Planning (LPP). We will deliver this by working with the Community Councils, Local Businesses, all the local people and facilitating the involvement of Highland Council, Highland & Island Enterprise, Scottish Government and NHS Highland.

**A Local Place Plan** is exactly that - it must be led by the local inhabitants.

### **What will it look like?**

After all the many meetings and discussions, I have been involved with, there are some very clear and easily understood messages that I think will resonate with all the inhabitants of Nairnshire.

**The first big message is INFRASTRUCTURE FIRST** - no more sprawling housing developments on our beautiful surrounding green fields until we have sorted out our essential infrastructure.

**We need a By-pass** - if the money is not there to dual the A96 then we still need a by-pass - responsibility lies with Scottish Government and Transport Scotland

**Sewage** - we need to upgrade our Victorian sewage system and stop polluting the River Nairn and our beaches-responsibility lies with Scottish Water and SEPA.

**Flood risk** - Fishertown is the most at risk part of the SEPA area covering Highland and Moray including Nairn - responsibility lies with SEPA

**New Academy** - essential we replace the condemned building with a high quality new build-responsibility lies with Highland Council/Scottish Government

**Town Centre Regeneration** - we have too many empty or underused properties in the Town centre- responsibility lies with Highland Council and the Private Sector to bring all these properties back into use

**Electricity** - we need an upgraded electrical supply - responsibility lies with Scottish Government.

**Green sustainable energy** - building on the excellent work of the Lido Group we will explore using our natural sandstone under the Firth to heat the swimming pool-responsibility lies with Highland Council, Scottish Government and Lido Group

**Water supply** - we need to upgrade our water supply to allow businesses to expand - responsibility lies with Scottish Water

**Broadband** - again we need to upgrade our broadband and allow companies to expand-responsibility lies with Scottish Government.

**Harbour** - again in urgent need of upgrade and repair. It could provide a focus for a wide range of water sports and tourism activities - responsibility lies with Harbour Board and Highland Council

The other really exciting development is by working with the Local business sector and prioritising more land for business and commercial use we can deliver a lot more local jobs and build this greener, sustainable circular economy so essential to all our future. This enables many more people to live, work, shop and socialise locally - this again boosts the local economy and drives up the return on the money invested. Footfall is the key to success. We will work with the Nairnshire Economic Forum to deliver this joined up way of delivering these projects together

Looking forward our younger people will have more job opportunities to live work and above all remain in Nairn. This will boost our local economy and again drive more investment and job security.

We will remain an attractive place to live, work, retire and holiday in. Nairnshire is seen as a good place to invest, and we must show a return on all this investment and above all provide value for money.

The assets included in our Royal Burgh of Nairn Common Good - lower River Nairn, Dunbar Golf Club, Maggot, Parkdean Caravan site, the Links, Sandown

and many parts of the town centre including Viewfield - are worth their weight in gold as amenities for us all to enjoy.

We are acknowledged as having world class wetlands, woodlands, golf courses and historical buildings - these all make this such an attractive place to stay and to holiday in.

This must all come with a price tag. A reasonable guestimate of all of the above is between 5-600 million pounds. This money obviously comes from different budgets and includes private sector investment.

We must address the idea of Fair Share weighted capitation budgets. All the DATA and information I have seen supports the knowledge that Nairnshire is being consistently underfunded. The biggest gap is in Integrated Health and Social Care budget, probably millions of pounds but it exists in all other budgets - education, leisure and recreation etc. Why is this so important? Well firstly secure recurring revenue streams allow us to borrow and repay capital spend. This is vitally important as we move forward in these difficult financial times.

It also means many more people living and working locally - this again boosts the local economy and drives up the return on the money invested. For example, we will provide many more home carers and supporting services - prioritising Integrated Community care and right sizing Specialist Consultant care. Put simply this will mean using the Nairn model of care to deliver optimum care and deliver value for money.

The Sports Club, the Community Centre and Team Hamish Splash Pad are also excellent examples of locally run services and again all will benefit from Fair share Budgets.

We will be holding a big open meeting in probably November to update everybody on the delivery of the Local Place Plan and the Economic Forum. This will be a joint meeting with both Community Councils.

At this meeting Sam will update us on the next Team Hamish Links Projects and continue the good work - we hope in time for next year's Summer Visitors to enjoy. What a fantastic job they have made of the Splash pad.

Also, Tibor will present his excellent thoughtful and historically fascinating ideas and option appraisal for regenerating the town centre. Can I thank him in

advance for this positive and helpful study. We will be circulating it widely after tonight. It is complemented by Don Murray's work on a Strategic Economic Plan and Active Masterplan and Fiona Willis's updated engineering report on the old Police station. (Both available on our website)

So, we have an option - do we take this opportunity and deliver an exciting and sustainable future which supports Nairn as it moves towards being a "Green" town for the future generations of Nairn children or do we just sit back and accept an inevitable slide into the dormitory town for Inverness.

Starting tonight I know which option I prefer, and I would ask for your support and political pressure to ensure it happens

Finally, I would like to mark the retiral of 2 of our original Directors

Iain Fairweather represented all that is good in Tourism with Visit Nairn, his fabulous photography, fiendish jigsaws, local businesses and his determination to help NICE flourish. We wish him good health and a long and happy retirement nearer his family.

Mike Barnett is just an amazing whirlwind of energy and brain power From Rotary to Music Nairn, Men's Shed to so many gardening groups, with NICE from the beginning - calm, confident, diligent and hard working - what more can you ask from any one individual.

Enjoy your retirement and Ireland - Keep gardening and keep helping NICE flourish

Many sincere thanks to you both

**Dr Alastair L Noble MBE** (for Integration of Health and Social Care and Conservation work in Nairnshire)

Chair NICE

September 2022