

# The Inverness Courier

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## TRIBUTE TO LOCAL LEGEND



## ENTHUSIASM OF YOUTH

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A feasibility study into a community food-growing project at Sandown Lands is being carried out.

## Views sought on plans for food-growing project

RESIDENTS are invited to express their views on a project which could see a community food-growing project created at Sandown Lands.

Highland Council launched a survey which is open until August 2.

Enscape Consulting Ltd was appointed by the council in February and is undertaking the survey as part of a project feasibility study.

The field also has potential for the installation of solar panels as part of the proposed development, to raise income for future works within the site.

The study, scheduled to conclude in September, will assess the practicality and viability of the scheme and identify opportunities and challenges.

Brian Menzies, director of Enscape Consulting, encouraged as many people as possible to take part in the survey and said: "The feasibility study for

Nairn is well under way and will align well with the council's strategic priority to deliver a more sustainable Highland environment as well as support the delivery of the council's food growing strategy.

"This also aligns with work being progressed nationally as the Scottish Government's 2024 strategy 'Local Food for Everyone', where the desire is for everyone to have the opportunity to enjoy food and drink produced locally."

A final report and recommendations will be reported to relevant council committees for their consideration.

Site visits and meetings involving Enscape and local organisations and residents have already taken place, including the local place planning workshops in May.

The survey is available online at [www.surveymonkey.com/r/PFQMBXH](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PFQMBXH)

# Italians look to Nairn for health model

## Researchers examine area's community care

By **Federica Stefani**  
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HEALTHCARE in Nairn is making a splash internationally, as a model for community care in Italy.

Nairn Town and County Hospital was renovated and expanded in 2012, integrating community hospital, primary care and social care functions.

It is now one of a range of models being examined by Italian researchers through the Community Hospitals Association (CHA).

In 2022, the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP), using funding from the EU for post-Covid recovery, allocated €7 billion for community care.

The Italian government set out a strategy to strengthen the delivery of local healthcare with the creation of more than 300 community hospitals by 2026, and a team of researchers working on the project contacted CHA in order to learn more about UK models.



**Alastair Noble at the entrance to Nairn Town & County Hospital.**



**Helen Tucker, CHA president.**

Picture Gary Anthony

Dr Alastair Noble, a Nairn community councillor, had a major role in the project wearing another of his hats, as Scotland lead for the CHA.

"In Nairn, what works is having the right range of services in the community, and this is down to the integration of health and social care," he said.

"Ultimately, this is part of a virtuous cycle that can benefit the whole community, and it all adds up to a better quality of life.

"This is an integrated model where you bring together doctors,

nurses, social care and other specialists in the same place, and Nairn's is seen very highly in the UK.

"It's about the building of a system where you have a GP surgery and a hospital at the same time, but also about the staff - and maintaining a good retention of staff is key.

"Allowing people to receive the care they need at home, especially for the elderly and palliative care, is (also) really vital to the quality of care."

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## Little drummer boy

THE youngest member of Nairn Pipe Band had his first public performance as the band opened the first summer ceilidh at the community centre earlier this month.

Drummer Jackson Boylan (7) joined the band around a year ago, following in the footsteps of younger sister Kayleigh, who plays the pipes.

He is the youngest of a new cohort of growing talents within the band.

Dad Michael said: "It's been great to see the work done by the pipe band to develop and entice some of the younger ones.

"They have got a lot of young members coming in. Jackson is the youngest of course, and that was the first time he played in public with the band. "He loved it, he was really pleased.

"The next big one now will be at the Nairn Highland Games."

Pipe Major Kevin Reid said it was great to see the young drummer perform.

He said: "As a community band it is essential that we encourage local young people to learn the pipes and drums, within our structured practices on a Thursday night, to ensure we progress not only the band but the traditional instruments and music we play.



**Jackson Boylan (7) was thrilled after the performance.**

"Jackson, the younger brother of one of our pipers (Kayleigh), has successfully proved that enthusiasm, commitment and practice is rewarded with the opportunity to play with the band at exciting local events.

"Although having never played the drums before he has, starting with the rudiments, followed our drummer tutors' lessons and guidance to be well on the way to becoming a valued member of the drum corps and band."

# Bench tribute to local legend

By **Federica Stefani**  
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A NEW bench made from upcycled plastic collected from Nairn beach has been installed at the town's harbour in memory of a cherished member of the community.

The bespoke memorial bench was made by Green Hive's workshop team and volunteers and is dedicated to the memory of David Bunker Main, father of local resident Dawn Main.

A skipper on the last large commercial fishing boat which sailed belonging to Nairn - the INS 185 Strathnairn - Mr Main was known for his love of his family, being a skilled and respected skipper, and dedicated Rangers supporter with a love of getting a bite to eat and a pint or two, especially in the town's Seaforth Club where many stories started with "I only went in for a pint...."

The project was spearheaded by Dawn, who envisioned a memorial that not only honoured her father's memory but also contributed positively to the environment he cared for so deeply.

She said: "Dad loved the sea. After spending his working life on it, he would go and sit at the harbour when he retired, and we often got a bag of chips and just watched the gulls and the waves.

"When he was young, he could be found at the end of the pier, setting lines and catching fish before he went full-time to sea on his 15th birthday.

"This spot means a lot to our family and I'm very grateful to Robert Barron, harbour master, who gave us permission to place the bench here and who was also a long time crew member of the Strathnairn.

"I hope lots of people enjoy watching the gulls and the waves from the bench"



**Matthew Withey.**



**The bench at Nairn Harbour is dedicated to Mr David Bunker Main, inset**

The recycled plastics used for the bench were gathered through collaborative efforts by Green Hive and local volunteers. The initiative not only helped reduce plastic waste but also raised awareness about the impact of pollution on marine life.

The bench's design, crafted by the team and volunteers at Green Hive's Community Workshop, aims to combine durability with aesthetic appeal, ensuring it will be a fixture for years to come.

Dawn added: "Working with Green Hive has been a wonderful experience, they

have a great team and I'm delighted with the design of the bench they created for me"

Matthew Withey, chief executive of Green Hive said: "We are thrilled to see this



**Above: David with his daughter Dawn. Right: The Green Hive team unveiled the bench.**



project come to fruition. "It is a testament to the power of community action and a beautiful way to honour someone who made a significant impact on our town. We hope it inspires others to continue efforts in preserving our environment."

He added: "Green Hive is always looking for more volunteers for our Community Workshop, if you would like to get involved in other exciting projects like this one get in touch with Green Hive at nre@greenhive.co.uk"

A family tribute will take place on Saturday following instalment of the bench.

## Italian researchers look at healthcare

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He said seeing Nairn being used as an inspiration on an international level is testament to the importance of community practice, especially in rural areas.

Nairn Town and County hospital serves 16,000 people, with more than 200 people working there.

CHA president Helen Tucker said that it was great to work with the Italian team - with lessons also being learned the other way around as well.

"What the Italian government is aiming to do is incredibly ambitious," she said. "They have to set this up in a short time, and it's vital that they are able to engage everyone so it works as well as it can do.

"We have had community hospitals in the UK for over 150 years so there is much to learn from our established model, and the new model that the Italians are developing."

She added: "I have spoken at two national conferences in Italy on this and we are finding that there is much to learn from all sides. We

are delighted that there is such strong recognition and investment in community hospitals in Italy, and we are focused on helping them to make the most of this investment opportunity for the benefit of their communities."

Francesca Meda, part of the Italian research team, said: "This collaboration has been incredibly useful for us.

"For us, this is mostly about rethinking the organisational model we have in Italy for care within the communities. And because these can be drastically different (from an urban context, such as Rome, to very rural areas) it's important that this model is flexible and able to adapt to different needs.

"What was a highlight for us is how examples such as Nairn and the UK are really valued by their communities, they are grassroots realities, which people rely on, and that is particularly important in a rural setting. They are able to adapt to the requirements that come from the people who use the service."

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