

Newsletter

Chief executive's ICFGF update



Welcome to the latest Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport community newsletter.

As we work towards the full establishment of the Green Freeport, the aim of these updates is to help us fully inform you about what it means for our communities and to keep you up to date on our progress.

As you will see, a great deal has been happening over the past few months as this important and transformative initiative continues to gather momentum.

In addition to this newsletter, you can find out more about the Green Freeport in a series of short videos we have created, which can be viewed on [our website](#), where you will also find regular updates and further information about ICFGF.

We will always be happy to try and answer any questions you may have, and you can find our contact details at the foot of this newsletter.

Calum MacPherson
Chief Executive, ICFGF

ICFGF Full Business Case submitted



In order to fully establish a Green Freeport, a Full Business Case (FBC) for the initiative has to be approved by ministers in the Scottish and UK governments.

ICFGF's Full Business Case was submitted to Holyrood and Westminster in June, after being endorsed by The Highland Council.

A huge amount of work went into the preparation of this detailed document, once again underlining the commitment and enthusiasm of all those involved, from the private and public sectors and academia.

It is now being reviewed by the Scottish Government and the recently elected UK Government and we look forward to the outcome of that process in due course.

Councillor Ken Gowans, Chair of The Highland Council's Economy and Infrastructure Committee, Cllr Ken Gowans said: "The finalisation of the Final Business Case marks a major milestone in the delivery of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport, which together with our £2billion Highland Investment Plan, will bring transformative change through economic regeneration and sustainable growth in employment across the Highland region.

"With some 520 hectares of land for development, the proposals are estimated to deliver over £6.5bn of investment over the next 25 years, enable 18,300 long-term jobs to be created across the UK and provide Non Domestic Rates (NDR) revenues of £547m for additional investment in Highland.

"This will significantly reverse population decline and attract new skills and innovation industries and there is already work underway to create career pathways and partnerships to develop the future workforce of the Highlands to meet current and future business demand, attracting public/private investment and best practice."

Supporting our young sports stars

ICFGF was delighted to support an initiative by the Camanachd Association that enabled 43 pupils from Highland secondary schools to hone their shinty skills at the USA Girls Performance Camp in June.

The seven-day camp, held at Lawrenceville School, near New York, provides high quality shinty coaching, as well as a rich cultural experience for participants.

Five Highland schools were represented there: Ardnamurchan High; Kingussie High; Kilchuimen High, Inverness Royal Academy and; Portree High.



ICFGF Chief Executive, Calum MacPherson, said: "Young people currently growing up in the Highlands will play a critical part in the future energy economy of the region.

"As this fantastic initiative shows, there are no barriers to what this up-coming generation can achieve, given the right opportunities. These young people will be tomorrow's leaders on and off the field. ICFGF is delighted to have been able to support a scheme helping to create an equal playing field for young women in sports."

New board members appointed at ICFGF

ICFGF has welcomed UHI Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Vicki Nairn, and recently appointed Port of Cromarty Firth (PoCF) Chief Executive, Alex Campbell, pictured right, onto its board.

Vicki, who started her current role at the university in March, had been serving as UHI's Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor since October 2022, and initially joined the institution as Vice-Principal Operations in November 2021. Vicki succeeds Roger Sendall, who served as ICFGF Board Member representing UHI.



Alex, a business leader with extensive experience in the renewables, oil and gas, marine and environmental sectors, joined PoCF from environmental and geospatial consultancy APEM Ltd, where he was Managing Director, based in Aberdeen.

Alex has succeeded Bob Buskie, who retired after a decade at the helm of the Invergordon-based Trust Port. During Bob's tenure, staff and land capacity doubled and the port played

a leading role in the drive to win Green Freeport status for Inverness and the Cromarty Firth.

We look forward to working closely with Vicki and Alex and wish Roger and Bob all the best.

Meanwhile, our existing small team of three will increase in number over the next year as the Green Freeport is established. After 12 months of being very well looked after by The Green House, we have moved to offices where we will be able to accommodate more staff.

Our new address is:

**UHI House (formerly the Centre for Health Science building adjacent to Raigmore Hospital)
Old Perth Road,
Inverness
IV2 3JH**

Our office phone number remains the same - 0333 091 1985

Ardersier secures £100m credit facility



In May, it was announced Haventus, the energy transition facilities provider, and owner of Ardersier Port, east of Inverness, had secured a £100million joint credit facility from the Scottish National Investment Bank (the Bank) and UK Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) with £50m million investment from each.

The financing follows a £300m capital commitment announced in 2023 by leading energy investment firm Quantum Capital Group, when Haventus began the redevelopment of Ardersier Port.

The facility will underpin the creation of a nationally significant infrastructure facility to support industrial-scale deployment of fixed and floating offshore wind. Haventus has taken a final investment decision and construction has now begun on the site, which includes the development of a new 650-metre quay wall and associated quayside.

Ardersier Port is ideally located to support offshore wind developers and manufacturers of offshore wind components. As an ICFGF tax site, the port will offer a 450-acre site with quayside access and suitable infrastructure for marshalling, integration, manufacturing, and assembly of offshore wind components. It will be the largest dedicated offshore wind deployment port facility in Scotland, capable of hosting and supporting gigawatt scale projects.



Proud to sign up to Buy Social Scotland

ICFGF is proud to be among the latest organisations to sign up to the Buy Social Scotland Pledge.

The national initiative, led by Social Enterprise Scotland and supported by the Scottish Government, aims to strengthen opportunities for social enterprises within the country's supply chains.

ICFGF signed up to underline its commitment to working with the third sector in the Highlands and to help encourage other organisations to do the same.

ICFGF Chief Executive, Calum MacPherson, said: "We are proud to join the growing list of companies and organisations that are showing their commitment to strengthening supply chain opportunities for social enterprises by signing up to this Pledge.

"People might be surprised to know that in the Highlands and Islands alone in 2021 there were 1,277 social enterprises operating, with 7,228 full time employees and contributing £197m to the area's economy, according to the most recent census by Scottish Government.

"ICFGF is still in the process of being fully established, but we are firmly committed to ensuring opportunities for social enterprises in our procurement and supply chain."

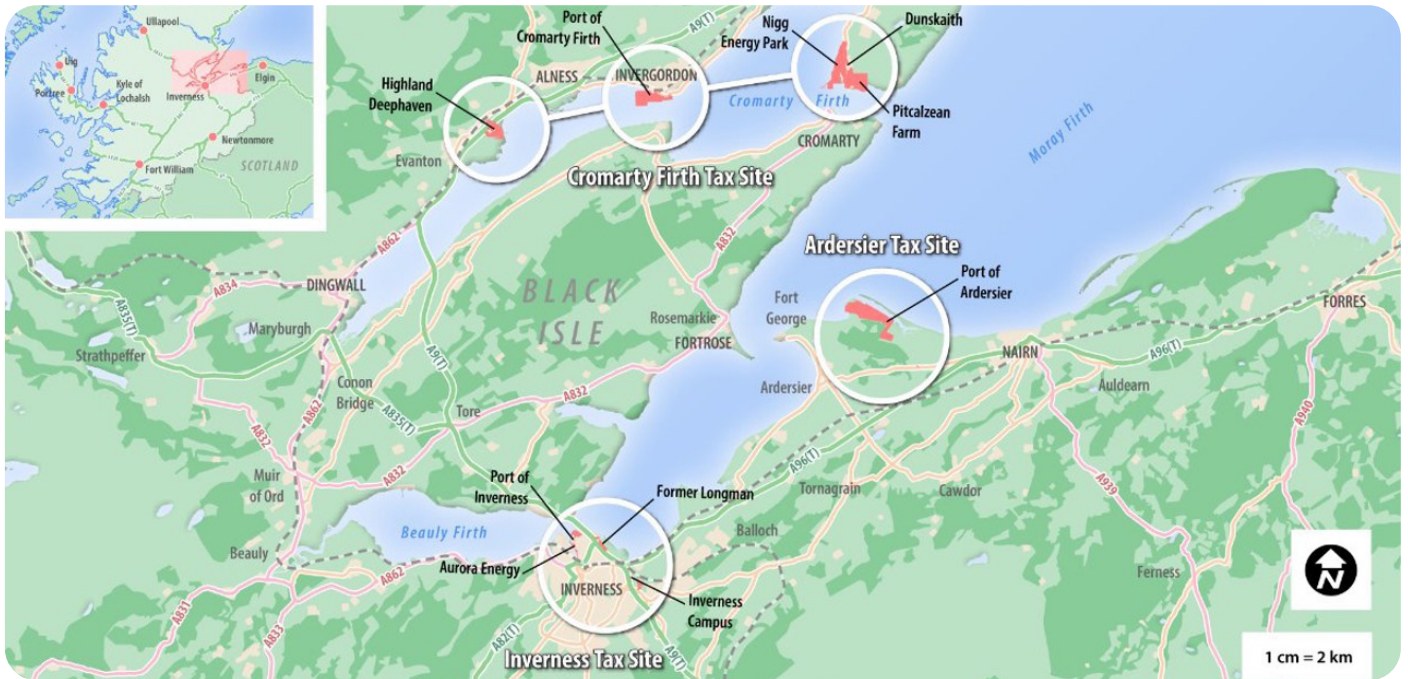
Supply chain support

As members of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB), ICFGF were among the wide range of participants who took part in the organisation's Highlands, Islands and Moray Bootcamp, held at Inverness Caledonian Thistle Stadium in April.

As one of the keynote speakers, Chief Executive Calum MacPherson highlighted the range of supply chain opportunities that are likely to open up for local businesses as a result of the Green Freeport initiative.



Where is the Green Freeport?



Community engagement

Our recent engagements with various Highland Council committees have enabled us to gather view from across the region. Elected members from different areas have praised the project's impact.

Highland Council Vice Convener and Economy and Infrastructure Committee Chair Cllr Ken Gowans stated it has "raised the profile and really put us on the map." Chair Nairnshire Committee, Cllr Michael Green described it as "a fabulous investment... on the cusp of a really prosperous time."

Wester Ross, Strathpeffer and Lochalsh Committee (Co-Chair) Cllr Liz Kraft emphasised the need to communicate that "the Green Freeport is different." Meanwhile, Black Isle and Easter Ross Committee Chair Cllr Lyndsey Johnston highlighted the "vast opportunities" the project brings to the whole area.

These insights reflect the growing optimism and support from Highland communities, underscoring the significant positive impact of our work across these regions.

Green Freeport myths and facts

Myth	Fact
The Green Freeport is the same operating model as other freeports.	There are many freeports across UK and Europe and they all have different structures. ICFGF is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with no shareholders. Any surplus revenue will be re-invested into the Green Freeport to meet operating costs and future development plans. Our Articles of Association are available online .
This will benefit only the Cromarty Firth area and not the rest of the Highlands.	The supply chain opportunities extend not only to larger businesses but support services from across the Highlands. We are also working with Social Enterprise Scotland to understand how we can integrate the third sector into procurement within the sector. The main benefit will be retaining young people to stay, train and work in the Highlands and the subsequent investment in the supporting infrastructure to make this happen.
The Green Freeport has lots of cash.	Part of the model for the Green Freeport is that working together with Highland Council, we hope to create a reserve from the additional Non-Domestic Rates that are generated as a result of growth. Whilst some way off, when this fund begins to accumulate, we will be looking to support infrastructure that improves the capacity of our communities and our region. Currently, we have a small £20k fund to support a small number of community projects.