

HBW's 30th Anniversary Marked with Leadership Transition

by Emma Glass, President Highland Business Women



Well, here we are with our first column of 2025. Excitingly Highland Business Women is 30 years old this year, wow! There will be some of you who remember when the organisation first launched and have been members for most if not all that time. It is an incredible milestone and one that will absolutely be celebrated throughout the year. By the time you read this we will have hosted our first event of the year our Charity of the Year selection lunch. If you are not familiar with this process towards the end of each year, we invite local charities to apply to be our Charity of the Year for the following year. The charities that apply go through a judging process and those that make the shortlist present their charity to our members at our annual lunch. Our members that attend the lunch then cast their votes for who they would like to be our charity for that year. It is always a special event, and it is wonderful to hear more about the local charities we have right here on our doorstep along with their missions

and goals. In the time I have served on the board I have been lucky enough to help champion charities such as Mikeysline, Calman Trust, and Highland Action for Little Ones – Halo and I am very proud to say over those years collectively we have managed to raise over £18,500 for those charities. The final figure raised for Halo in 2024 was £8000 and we were ecstatic to present that cheque to them in January. There were also over 2500 items donated to them throughout the year alongside monetary donations via the network totalling an additional £3700 which is phenomenal! I have no doubt that with our members support there will be more incredible fundraising done in 2025 for this year's chosen charity. We have some brilliant events coming up. We are excited to bring to you a special International Women's Day event in March which will include a panel discussion from female pioneers in our local communities who are excelling in their fields. It will also soon be time for the launch of the 2025 Awards. As I mentioned earlier, this year is

the 30th Anniversary of HBW so it's set to be a biggie! As always please stay tuned to our social channels for more news on everything that's coming up. If you aren't following us already you can find us on Facebook, Instagram, & LinkedIn all pages are @highlandbusinesswomen. This will be my last column as part of the Board of Directors of HBW and of course as President of this fantastic organisation as I step down at the end of March. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Natalie Bruce who manages our social media & communications and Karen Simpson our joint events coordinator. We are all bowing out at around the same time having served almost 7 years on the board between us. If you have met them, you will know both Natalie and Karen are fantastic. They have been a delight to serve on this board with and have brought so much to their roles. They are dedicated, passionate, inspiring and have championed local women in business and I know both have made a huge impression on our members. I will forever be

grateful to the Association of Scottish Businesswomen (ASB) and of course all the board directors I have collaborated alongside along with our members for trusting me with the running of HBW. I have been on the board nearly 3 years now of which two of those I was President. I have had the most incredible and rewarding time and have far, far too many highlights to mention. Alongside making great connections I have made friendships that will last a lifetime with people I would never have encountered had it not been for this group and that is exactly what HBW is all about: Networking, Sharing, & Inspiring! There is a wonderful board of directors currently who are all enthusiastic about championing women in businesses and organisations in the Highlands and ensuring HBW continue to create great networking and collaboration opportunities for them. Iris Thompson-Burton will be taking the reins from me as President. Iris did an exceptional job in 2024 as the charity ambassador for Halo and was instrumental in many of the things we did throughout the year. She has shown continued dedication to this board and our members, and I know that under her guidance HBW will continue to thrive. So that's about it from me & I look forward to seeing you all at events on the other side as a guest. Best wishes always, Emma.



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