

Humour and the craic are always on the menu

A place for folk to enjoy a warm welcome, a blether and hearty food was the realisation of a long-held dream for **Jackie McIntosh**, owner of Good Craic Café

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Q How would you describe your business to a stranger?

A A wee Highland café, with a big personality! I've tried to create a café that always gives a genuine welcome to everyone. A place to come for a blether and get the craic. Laughter and good craic have always been a big part of who I am and if we can put a smile on someone's face, it's been a good day. We hope customers will remember that about us the most. It's an independent family business with my brother, sister, and nephew as part of the team. I've also got staff from my time at the Fluke Bar, which is 30 years ago this year!

Q What inspired you to start the business?

A I've always loved hospitality and have been involved in it most of my life, starting as a dishwasher at 11. I've thought about having my own café for a number of years. I was walking down the High Street a year ago, noticed the sign above the door, with consent already granted. The location and size were just too good an opportunity to pass up. The drive and excitement of a good service is still there.

Q How has your business developed?

A We got the café opened on December 5, 2022, not the ideal time to open a new business. Even with all our planning, it was definitely a baptism of fire! You only get one chance to create a good first impression, but the incredible support and understanding from locals over the first few weeks has been humbling. With their positive feedback and suggestions, we knew we were on the right track.



Jackie McIntosh, owner of Good Craic Café owner.

Picture: James Mackenzie

Q What are your plans to develop your business in the future?

A At the moment we operate from 8.30am-4.30pm, Monday-Saturday. Our aim is to open seven days a week and longer hours into the evening, but our biggest challenge going forward is recruiting the right people to join our wee team. Since Covid we have lost very talented people to other sectors.

Q What lessons have you learnt from your time in business?

A To have a great team around you, your staff are your business. If you look after them, encourage them and develop them, you're halfway to having a successful business. Effective training for all staff is important but especially for young people starting their first job. Give them your time and your knowledge. It's inspiring to see them develop and succeed. Listen and act on all the feedback you receive, good or bad. Take any help that's offered and treat every day as a school day.

Q What's your vision for Inverness city centre?

A It's great to see restrictions in Scotland on outside seating being lifted. People sitting outside enjoying their coffee helps to create a great atmosphere on any city high street.

Q Can you tell us something interesting about yourself?

A On May 13, it was 20 years since I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. I was landlady at the Fluke Inn. After losing the sight in my left eye - imagine the jokes of being blind drunk - but when the sight also went in my right eye, humour got me through a very dark (sorry!) period. It would be nine months before my sight returned and I could go back to work in a place I loved. In 2010 I started work at the MS Therapy Centre, which was humbling, inspiring and some of the happiest years of my working life. I'd heard dark humour in the pub but the people at the centre dealt with their life-changing diagnoses with dignity and hilarious humour, it still makes me smile - a time I'll never forget. I have been extremely fortunate over the last 20 years with my MS - the only thing catching up with me now is old age.