

Ground Breaking Work at Drummie *Obair aig Druim Muighe*

The creation of a new working environment and more efficient working practices at Drummie, is estimated to achieve full year savings of £250,000. Our Business Improvement Team was given a mandate to improve the working practices of the business support staff in all Services moving to Drummie and have worked with local staff and managers to identify opportunities to reduce the amount of effort required to deliver support services.

As a result of the move, the number of business processes was reduced from 167 to 48. Physical storage requirements were dramatically reduced from 408 to 260 linear metres. 70 printers, 14 copiers and 7 fax machines were replaced with 6 multi-functional devices and two printers and new systems have already been introduced to manage some of the core tasks such as handling the mail and the contact point at the public entrance to the building.

A central business support team, comprising five full time equivalent staff, is to be established at Drummie to operate all the core business support processes and ensure that the building continues to function efficiently.



Credits *Taing*

The Council's new flagship office complex was disused when the Council decided to totally refurbish it and provide modern office accommodation for 130 administrative and professional staff from a number of Council Services and associated car parking. The Council's former Sutherland County Committee also agreed that a site, extending to 4.36 hectares adjacent to the proposed new Council offices, be sold to the Highland Housing Alliance, who propose to develop 72 houses for affordable rent, low cost home ownership and open market sale.

Already, the building has won a commendation from the IAA Awards for Architecture 2008 in the category, New Life for Old Buildings.

The main contractor was Morrison Construction Ltd, Inverness.

The Project Manager was Ian Morrison of Davis Langdon, Aberdeen.

The Architect was Sandy Borrie of Colin Armstrong Associates.

The Building Services Engineer was Pick Everard, Inverness.

The Civil and Structural Engineer was Andrew Fleming of WA Fairhurst and Partners, Inverness.

The Council's own staff in Housing and Property have been heavily involved in the supervision of the project.

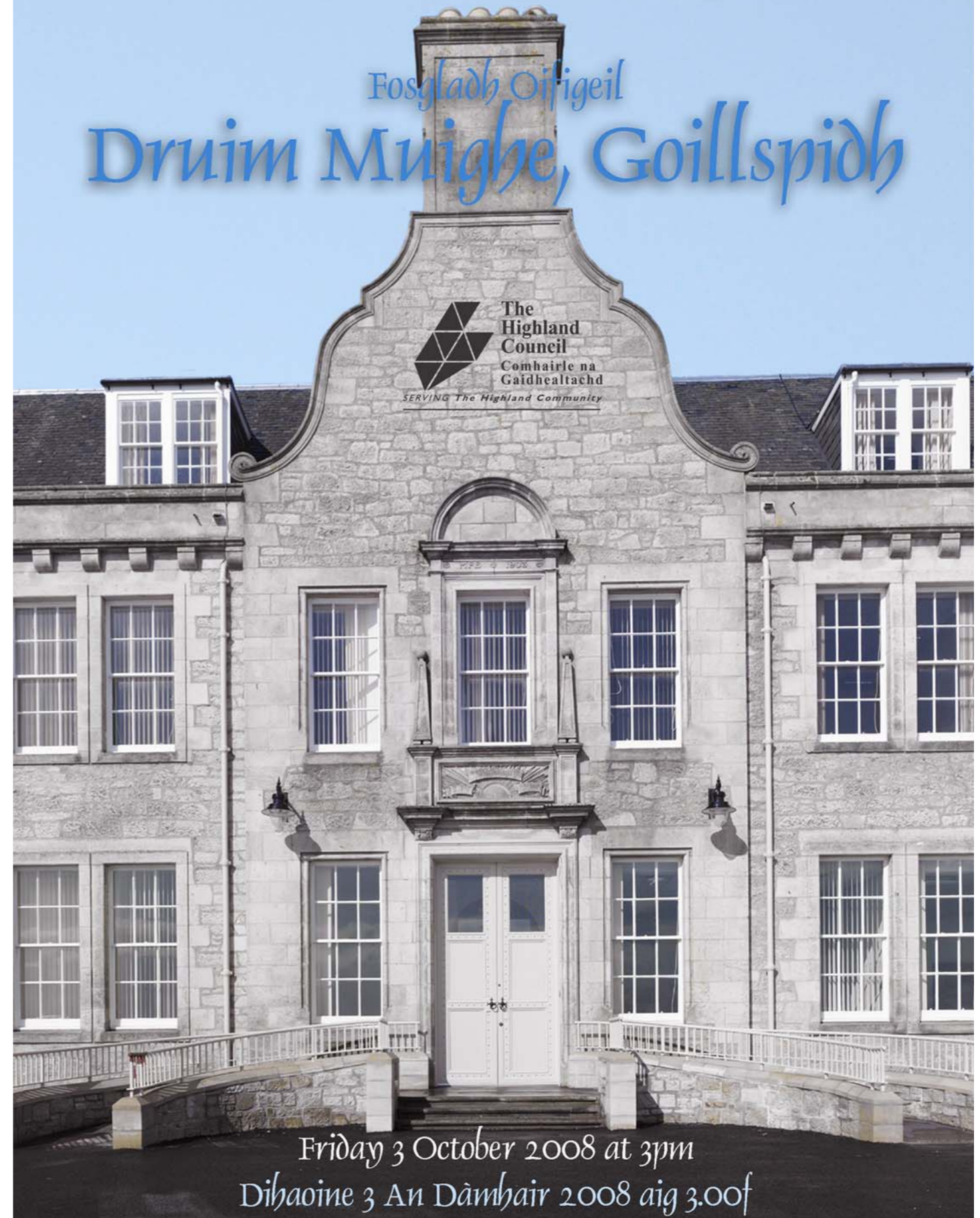
Fujitsu Services have provided the ICT services.

A new ghost island junction was built on the A9 by Rok Construction to allow safe access to the new offices. It also provided a safe access for the construction of the windfarm at Kilbraur and for the proposed new affordable houses at Drummie.

PR08-158-K

Formal Opening Of Drummie, Golspie

Fosgladh Oifigeil
Druim Muighe, Goillspidh



Friday 3 October 2008 at 3pm
Dihaoine 3 An Dàmhair 2008 aig 3.00f

Welcome to the Formal Opening of Drummie, Golspie

Fàilte gu Fosgladh Oifigeil Dhruim Muighe, Goillspidh

On behalf of the Council, can I warmly welcome guests to the formal opening of Drummie, Golspie, our new offices in East Sutherland. It is marvellous to see so many former pupils of Sutherland Technical School and Golspie High School with us today.

I am most impressed with the way this magnificent landmark building has been brought back into life. It represents a major commitment to the area by the Council. By bringing the majority of our staff in the area into the one office, we can significantly improve our service to the public and at the same time be more efficient.

Work began on Monday 21 August, 2006 and staff completed a phased transfer to Drummie from five offices - in Brora, Dornoch and Golspie - in May of this year.

Change is never easy and I would like to thank staff for the positive way they have adapted to their new place of work and improved ways of working.

Part of the project involved the formation of a new access off the A9. In addition to giving access to the new offices, the road has opened up land to the north of the A9 for much-needed affordable housing in the Golspie area. The development is being supported by the Council and the Highland Housing Alliance. The road also provides access from the A9 trunk road to the Kilbraur windfarm.

So all in all this is a real red letter day for Golspie, East Sutherland and the Highlands in general and it gives me great pleasure to be here to formally open Drummie.

A. S. Park

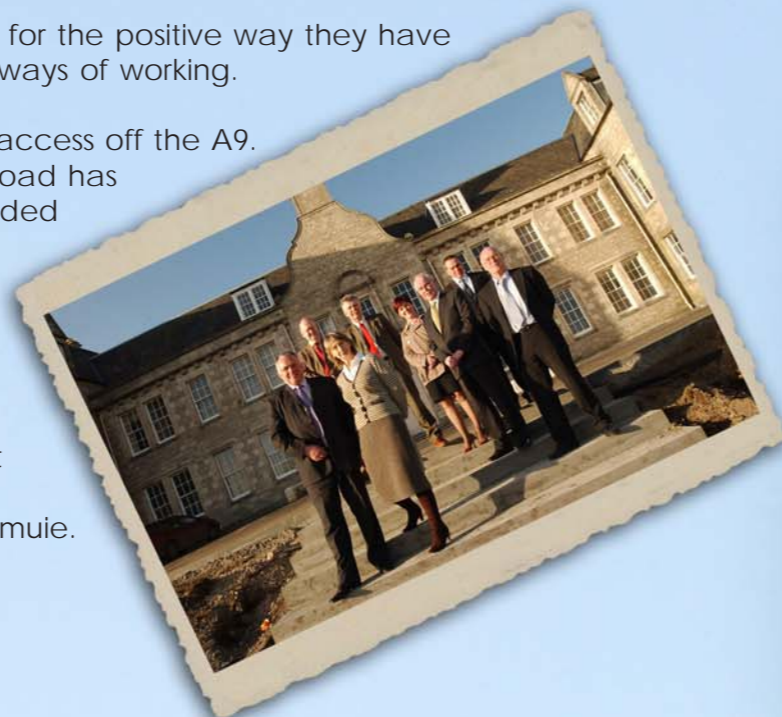
Sandy Park, Convener

Drummie is a magnificent and striking listed building; it is justifiably considered of high architectural heritage value and, as the former Sutherland Technical School, has many strong historical associations and links for people in Sutherland and beyond. The new Council office development allows the building to continue to make an important public service contribution to the people of Sutherland and also ensures a significant continued Highland Council presence in the County. The removal of the trees and the landscaping of the land to the front of the building have now returned it to its former status of early last century, as an impressive gateway to the village of Golspie.

W. J. Ross

Councillor Ian Ross, East Sutherland and Edderton

Drummie was built at the behest of Millicent, Duchess of Sutherland in 1903 for the education of crofters' sons in Caithness and Sutherland. It was funded by her husband, the Duke of Sutherland, as well as the Duke of Portland and Andrew Carnegie of Skibo Castle. During its years as the Sutherland Technical School, hundreds of pupils were trained in a wide variety of skills to fit them for careers across the Highlands and beyond.



In 1968 it ceased being run independently and became the technical studies wing of Golspie High School. The building closed in 2000 when a new technical studies wing opened on the site of Golspie High School.



Sutherland Technical School's log book reveals that the date of the opening was - coincidentally Monday 3 October 1904. It also reports that the school's first pupil - Donald Martin from Lochs, Lewis - arrived on 30 September, 1904 with his sister "after dark and without any previous notice. Beds were hastily made up for them. Martin was thus our first pupil".

One "old boy" is former Sutherland County Councillor George Murray from Rogart, who attended the Technical School between 1933-35. George (87) remembers his days at Drummie with fond affection and we are delighted that he has agreed to speak at today's opening.

During his spell at Drummie, there were 52 boys attending the residential school. He recalls most vividly the eating regime, with boys expected to cook their own meals. Breakfast consisted of a slice of bread and porridge, "which you could either swim in or stand on". Sundays were a treat with cornflakes on offer for breakfast and an apple at night.

He said: "I am delighted that the Council has breathed new life into Drummie. It would have been a crying shame to see such a beautiful building being allowed to decay, especially as it was gifted to the people by the Duchess of Sutherland."

Memorabilia from the former technical school is held by Golspie Heritage Society and there are plans to permanently display old photographs at Drummie.

