



# LINKS HOUSE

AT ROYAL DORNOCH

**VENTURE  
NORTH**  
TOURISM FOR  
CAITHNESS AND SUTHERLAND



# Beata Pett

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## Head Housekeeper

“ I was quite limited because I didn't speak much English 18 years ago, so I picked housekeeping for that reason because in a big hotel you didn't really have to communicate that much. After some time I realised I did like it and I've always loved cleaning so I knew this was the right position for me. I've tried different departments but again, I've realised that housekeeping is what I want to do and I can be a control freak over everything and have everything under control like I do!

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# What advice would you give to somebody thinking about pursuing a career in hospitality?

Do it. Don't hesitate. You will meet a lot of lovely people and you'll definitely make friends for life! There is something for everybody. Whether you want to be a bit more seen at the Front of House, or the Back of House like myself. Even if you like working nights, you can be a night porter and make nice cocktails for our evening guests. There's just something for everybody that's for sure.



What do you love about living in Sutherland?

I absolutely love the nature and the surroundings, within 10 minute drive you can be in the most beautiful places.



# Kerry Morrison

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## Guest Relations Manager

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I wanted to do something in the travel industry but I didn't really know what. I was then prompted by my mum to send a letter to a hotel that was opening and got a phone call to come in and I got the job. It was very much just a chance opportunity.

When I started off I was in housekeeping but then I went on to do more office based work. When the opportunity came up at Links House to do Guest Relations, I just went for it

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# Phil Scott

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Managing  
Director



My grandfather initially had prompted me to look for a job in a bar as a glass collector and I pretty much started from there and developed over the last 26 years I've been in hospitality, mainly moving between wine and food and beverage.

A lot of positions and circumstances present themselves, and I guess I'm a little bit tenacious when it comes to my career so I've always jumped at opportunities and given them everything I've got



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## How can I turn my passion into a career?

Provide the opportunity to an employer who can build and grow the embers of that passion. Being an intuitive service, Front of House people have this untouchable thing and a feeling they have around people and if somebody has that interest, find them somebody to fan those flames and then you will develop and it can take you anywhere. It's a global sector but in regards to Sutherland, there are a lot of opportunities to develop and enjoy life up here in hospitality and it should be viable career option

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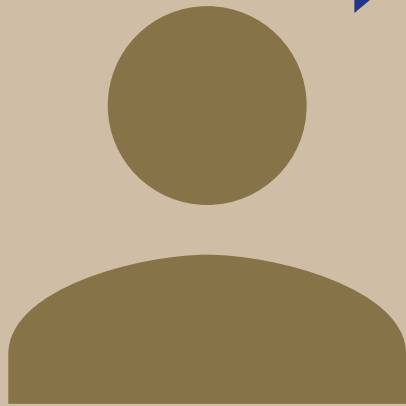
How it develops confidence, self-esteem, awareness, emotional intelligence, all of these really core attributes to being a really well-rounded person is huge.

## How will a career in the industry develop me as a person?

When I first started in hospitality I couldn't talk to anybody, but when I took my breaks I would be talking to the bar staff and I learnt confidence and how to talk to people. Everything about that came from hospitality

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What skills and experience do I need to work in hospitality?



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It's a very skilled art, no matter what part of the hospitality and hotelier industry you're in, and this often gets overlooked

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Having not studied hospitality, all my experience is vocational. I'm a firm believer of studying hospitality because you get a different approach to it, but the real nuts and bolts comes from vocational training and finding that place to do it.

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You deal with challenges and circumstances in different ways, and you can bring that towards hospitality. It can be fast paced at times, so you need to have a level of problem solving and sometimes that can actually be the fun because you get to do it as a team, you don't have to do it on your own. It's a collegiate approach.

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# Gwen Thompson

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Financial  
Manager

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It was totally fate coming into Links House. I had the background of finance before I came in but I didn't tell them. I was in a different position for a good few years and then the finance position became available and that's when I said, "I think I can do this". It was really just about taking the opportunity when it came.

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## What are the benefits of living and working in Sutherland?

It's a very healthy lifestyle. I mean if you compare it to a position where you're living in a city and you walk out and it's a concrete jungle. Here, you walk out your door and within 5 minutes you're on a beach, you're on a golf course, you're in the woods, you're in the hills, there's space, there's fresh air and then there's everything that goes with all of that, all with your family. Beats it hands down to a concrete jungle for me.

For me it's the team and I know the job is the big thing about it but the people that you work with, they become your second family

What is the best bit about working in hospitality?



# Kevin Barber

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## Head Chef

“ After I got made redundant, my wife pushed me into hospitality basically because I was doing all the cooking at home and I really enjoyed it. So I went and did an apprenticeship at the age of 25, when I was getting paid £3.60 an hour, so my wife very much supported me to do that. And I just kind of found a passion and a love for it.

I had a few pub jobs where I was just finding my feet and kind of seeing where I wanted to go with my career. I had one stint where I was at a place in Yorkshire for 6 years and while I was there I went from commis and banqueting to a 2 rosette kitchen. Then I was in a 3 rosette kitchen, pushing Michelin Star for 2 and a half years and that's when I went from a CDP to a sous chef. I kind of hit a ceiling at that job, so I left and went into a bit of pub work again, then when COVID hit I lost my job.

When my wife and I had a baby, she wanted to move up to Scotland because all her family lived up in Scotland, so we moved up. Again, I just got fortunate. I was playing with my little girl in her room when Phil, the Managing Director of Links House, rang me out of the blue inviting me for an interview and I've been at Links House ever since.

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What sparked  
your interest  
to work in  
hospitality?

I think it was something I always enjoyed. I was always watching my mum cook and even when I was 10 years old I remember wanting to do a Sunday roast for Mothers Day. It just took me a long time to realise that was what I actually enjoyed doing, but when I finally found it I knew this is what I wanted to do

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## How have you gotten to where you are today?

I started properly cheffing when I was around the age of 25, I'm now 34 and I've just worked hard, that's literally all I've done. The hours are long but if you enjoy the work you don't mind the hours, you just carry on and keep doing it. Eventually everything pays off.

A certain kind of wok ethic is required and you need to want to do the job because it is difficult and there are challenges. If you just work hard and learn from the people who are above you, then they will develop you. I've worked with numerous head chefs who were all very good and I've essentially just taken little bits from each of them and moulded myself around how I want to be a head chef. This is my first proper head chef role so I'm still developing myself now and how I want to run a kitchen, how I want to manage people and how I want to develop everyone else who is in my team.

I think a career in the industry is tough and challenging, but hard work always pays off. For me, I always like to see an end product. I couldn't see myself in an office typing away at a computer and filling in spreadsheets. Whereas I know if I'm six hours in a kitchen prepping, doing my mise en place and then I'm into service plating up dishes, making food that I want to cook. Having that end product is something that I value because it just shows that my hard work has paid off, then when it goes out and you get great feedback and everyone loves your food it just makes you feel fantastic.



“It’s a lifestyle living up here”

What does living and working in Sutherland offer you compared to other places?

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For me, I have a young family so the appeal is to raise my two little girls in the Highlands because, look at this place its beautiful! You can go into cities but it just gets a bit grey, a bit boring. Whereas when you’re in a place like this, every now and again you just have a little moment where you look outside the window and the suns just shining and you’re just like

*“I like being up here, it’s a nice place to work”.*

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I think tourism, especially for Dornoch, is massive. It’s something I had to get used to because when I was down South there’s no off season, you’re busy 12 months of the year.

How does the area you live and work benefit from tourism?

The influx of tourism also just shows that without it, it would be very difficult to run a successful business. In regards to my job, if the people aren’t here then you can’t do what you want to do, then you have to do what everybody else wants. Whereas Links does provide that opportunity to be a bit more expansive and experimental with the food.

# What advice would you give to somebody looking to pursue a career in the industry?

# 1

I think the best advice I can give is just work hard. Listen to those above you, sometimes it can be a little bit harsh but 9 times out of 10 they're only trying to help. If they can develop you and make you a better chef then you make their life easier and if you're making their life easier then it all just works together. Head down, work hard, learn and you'll progress automatically. It just happens naturally.



# 2

You do have to have a passion for it. If you have a passion for food and you enjoy eating food then 100% be a chef, because there is nothing more rewarding than making up a plate and sending it out and people loving it. It's great. The passion needs to be there, you need to have a desire to want to cook for people because it can be tough but on the other hand it is very rewarding.

