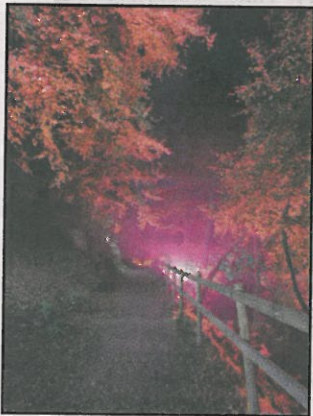


Tourism first for Pitlochry



MAJOR DRAW: *The Enchanted Forest is the central attraction.*

Johnathon Menzies

AN INNOVATIVE project is about to start in Highland Perthshire, designed to attract more tourists to the area.

The brainchild of local residents and the first of its kind in Scotland, the Pitlochry Area Community Interest Company (PACIC) was formally established in April this year.

It will be launched by North Tayside MSP John Swinney – who is also the Scottish Government's Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth – during a ceremony in Aberfeldy today.

The organisation plans to develop a new annual event, cur-

rently referred to as “the Northern Perthshire Autumn Festival,” with the Enchanted Forest as its central attraction.

The woodland illuminations, in Faskally Wood, near Pitlochry, currently bring 20,000 visitors to the region each year and generate £1m for the local economy.

Perth and Kinross Council's enterprise and infrastructure committee convener, Councillor John Kellas, described the move as “exciting.”

He added: “Tourism is a major factor in the region's economy, particularly in Highland Perthshire.

“It is particularly exciting

that, as we look to develop the social economy locally, the community in the Pitlochry area is achieving a first in Scotland by establishing PACIC.

“The aim is to build on the success of the Enchanted Forest and widen the spread of benefits to the local area,” he said.

There have been similar initiatives set up in other parts of Perthshire recently, such as the group established in Strathardle which has taken over the running of Kirkmichael's village shop.

But organisers say that none has been exclusively linked to the tourism industry.