

# Highpoints

# Sàr Phuingean



**Inside this issue:** New Apprentices - City Vision - Dementia Friendly

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Highpoints will be published online and some hard copies will be made available in service points and libraries.

# Welcome

I am delighted to present the latest edition of our new magazine Highpoints (Sàr Phuingean).

The aim of this new publication is to bring you news about the varied and excellent work and initiatives of the Council. The contents reflect the immense variation and richness of the work the Council is involved in across the Highlands – from major infrastructure projects, like the West Link, River Ness Flood Scheme and Ruthven Bridge, to new schools and educational projects, Welfare advice, training apprentices, waste and recycling and the promotion of tourism with a wealth of festivals and events.

There continues to be a huge number of attractions to draw visitors to our beautiful region, with Doors Open and Seashore events, summer festivals, the successful Blas festival, Belladrum, and the launch this year of the Movie Map, a joint project with Visit Scotland.

The Rich Picture on page 8 attempts to illustrate in picture form, just a flavour of the vast variety of work the Council is involved in.

There is some exciting experimental work going on across the region on the back of the Community Empowerment Act which received Royal Assent this summer. You can read about some of the projects, which aim to bring decision making closer to local communities, on page 11.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue of Highpoints as much as I have.



Best wishes!

**Isobel McCallum**  
Highland Council Convener

# West Link

Works on the long awaited Inverness West Link Project are now underway. Contractors are removing trees to clear the way for major utility services to be diverted between now and March 2016, in readiness for the main West Link Road Stage1 and the Canal Parks Enhancement works to start next spring.

Whilst the new road will result in the removal of 129 trees along the A82, Bught Road and south of the river Ness, these will be replaced with 178 established trees and over 3,000 saplings. Over time the new trees will mature and help to integrate the road into the local landscape. A quantity of the timber will also be set aside for community projects, such as seating and artwork.

The West Link will provide multiple benefits to the City. It is estimated that the project will provide a substantial cost-benefit ratio for the investment of 3.86, which represents nearly **£4 of benefit to every £1 of public investment.**

The new road will significantly reduce congestion and pollution in the city centre, speed up journey times from the A96 to the A82 and will remove traffic delays crossing the canal.

The city centre of Inverness suffers from increasingly severe traffic congestion due to increased growth and traffic, the influx of tourists and visitors and rush-hour "bottlenecks" forcing a large volume of traffic through a small number of routes. The West Link road will act as a distributor and provide alternative journey routes as well as enhancing active travel links, including cycling and walking within the city.

The project will also enable housing development and associated developer contributions and the construction employment will undoubtedly bring economic benefits to the area. Developer contributions of £3.75 million are anticipated following the development of land for housing.

Stage 2 of the project will provide vastly improved amenity and leisure facilities at the Torvean golf club and the Canal Parks, and will enable further development in this area. The existing facilities will be enhanced to provide a community facility managed by High Life Highland.

This stage of the project will be completed in 2020 following the relocation of the golf course.

The Council unanimously agreed a total of £55 million to progress the West Link and enhanced sports facilities in March 2015.



**WEST LINK**

Connecting our communities  
A' ceangal ar coimhearsnachdan

*Chair of Planning, Development and Infrastructure Committee, Cllr Audrey Sinclair, Council Leader Margaret Davidson and Provost Helen Carmichael together with Cllr Graham Ross, Chair of the Local Community Liaison Group, with the first of the new large trees to be planted on site.*

# Apprentices... you're hired!

The Highland Council has had a long term commitment to providing opportunities to young people through apprenticeship schemes.

Our modern apprentice scheme not only gives our apprentices a formal qualification and skills for life, but also offers very good employment prospects at the end of the 4 year training period. With the advancement of renewable energy, the apprentices we take will get the chance to learn about working with these new technologies, as well as gaining expertise on the more traditional skills associated with the trades.

In April this year, we announced we were looking to recruit for 6 new building maintenance apprenticeship positions in four different areas of Highland - Dornoch, Alness, Inverness and Fort William.

This year, for the first time, we used social media to promote the vacancies and were delighted to receive a fantastic response with a total of 258 applications. The successful young people selected are starting out in their apprenticeships with us across the Highlands this autumn.

Team Leader, Ian MacLean, manages six apprentices and several fully qualified former apprentices, based at our Harbour Road Building Maintenance Depot.

Ian said, "We currently have one new apprentice, two second year, one third year and two fourth year apprentices. They are learning a range of trades, plumbing, joinery and electricians. We like to take them from a pre-apprenticeship course or college, generally from the age of 18 up to about 23, although there is a cut-off age for funding some of the posts. The professional trade bodies provide supervision and training, such as CITB (Construction Industry Training Board) and SNIPEF (Scotland and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation.)"



"It is great to see the progression, from new apprentices through to experienced qualified tradespeople. This year we have Kiera, a new apprentice electrician working alongside Jake who fully qualified as an electrician just last week, and Mike who started out as an apprentice plumber with Inverness District Council in 1977."

Ian MacLean



### COVER PICTURE current and former apprentices

**Back Row: left to right**

**Stuart Watson** - 20 - Inverness  
4th year apprentice electrician

**Campbell Fraser** - 21 - Beauly  
4th year apprentice joiner

**Alasdair Morrison** - 19 - Inverness  
2nd year apprentice plumber

**Jake MacKinnon** - 22 - Inverness  
fully qualified electrician this month

**Kiera Tobin** - 18 - Tain  
1st year apprentice electrician

**Richard Boyd** - 23 - Ardersier  
(in the driving seat)  
fully qualified electrician

**Ian MacLean**  
Team Leader

**Peter Ashford** - 25 - Ardersier  
3rd year apprentice plumber

**Front Row: left to right**  
**Michael Vass** - 22 - Inverness  
fully qualified joiner

**Ally MacLeod** - 21 - Skye  
2nd year apprentice joiner

**Michael Campbell**  
Qualified plumber  
who started out as an apprentice in 1977



Kiera Tobin, 18, applied to become an apprentice electrician, in this spring's intake. She was successful out of 129 applicants for the post and started in August. For Kiera, this is a vocational career choice. She said, "I always wanted to be an electrician. My Dad inspired me. He is an electrician and I grew up watching him work and he used to let me hold the tools and let me think I was helping him. I did the pre-apprentice course at college and loved it and when this job came up, I applied and got it!"

Kiera travels in from Tain every morning at 6am and will start college on block release on 19 October. The apprentice course takes four years, to become fully qualified. Kiera is clear about the benefits of taking an apprenticeship route. She said:

“ You get to learn while you work – it's not just about sitting in a classroom. You get experience and benefit from working alongside experienced electricians and you get to work in a variety of jobs all over the area, wherever we are needed. ”

# And... action!

Visitors to the Highlands are being encouraged to follow in the footsteps of Harry Potter, Flash Gordon, James Bond and Batman with the launch of a new movie map.

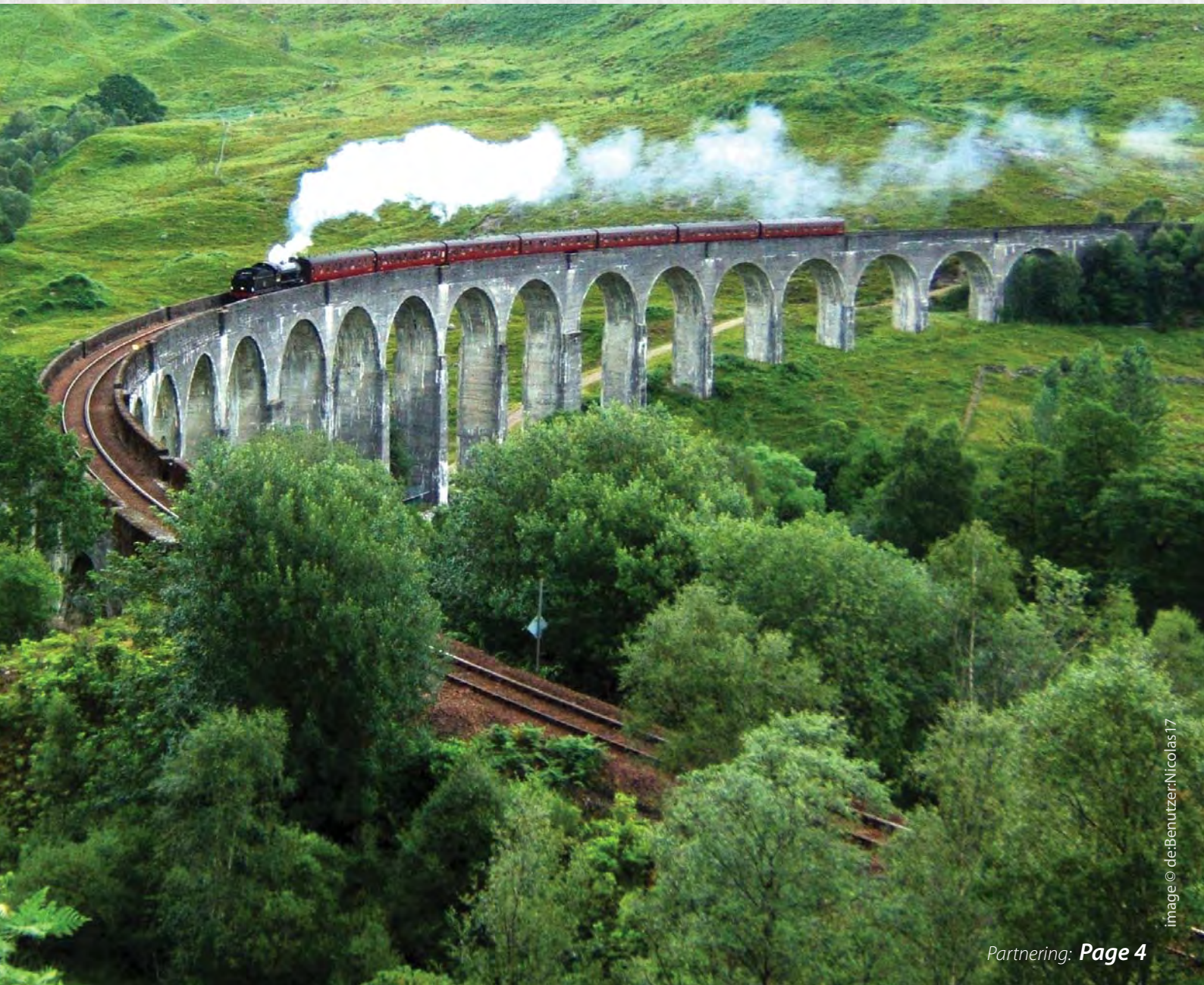
We've worked with VisitScotland to create The Highlands & Skye Movie Map which highlights around 50 filming locations across the Highlands and features everything from Hollywood blockbusters to low-budget horror flicks.

In a recent online poll by USA Today, Scotland was voted Best Cinematic Destination in the world.

Divided into different genres, the easy-to-follow guide capitalises on the popularity of set-jetting, where film fans visit real-life movie locations. Iconic sites listed include Eilean Donan Castle (as seen in Highlander and The World is Not Enough); Glen Coe (Skyfall and Alfred Hitchcock's The 39 Steps); and Glenfinnan Viaduct, which plays a starring role in the Harry Potter movies.

The map is available in VisitScotland Information Centres  
and can be downloaded at:

**[www.visitscotland.com/films](http://www.visitscotland.com/films)**



# Technology in Learning



## Funding boost for use of technology in learning

The Highland Council Care and Learning Service has been successful in securing £250,000 to support the development of the use of technology in learning.

We are one of 19 local authorities to receive money from the Inspiring Learning Fund which is a Scottish Government fund developed by the Scottish Futures Trust aimed at encouraging more opportunities for flexible learning and closer partnerships between schools and further education, in line with Curriculum for Excellence.

Louise Jones, our ICT in Learning Manager said:

“ This will make a real difference in developing the use of technology in learning for all Highland schools. The funding will go towards distance learning development and connecting schools, so we can create more course choices and opportunities for our learners. We are also planning to explore new technologies in learning and produce resources about the safe use of technology in learning. ”



# City Vision: Region deal takes shape

Highland Council has agreed the vision and a list of associated projects to form the basis of the case for the City-Region Deal to be presented to the UK and Scottish Governments.

A number of projects have been identified under the themes of a skilled economy; a growing and sustainable economy and an enabled economy.

A skilled economy focuses on projects, which facilitate a highly skilled workforce, attracting graduates, promoting greater uptake in science and technology and expanding construction skills initiatives.

Further projects are aimed at a growing and sustainable economy through life sciences and health, and the promotion of tourism and renewables.

Recognising the importance of connectivity, there are a range of infrastructural projects and projects to accelerate the provision of effective broadband and mobile coverage across the whole region and enhanced wifi availability, as well as support for small businesses to take advantage of digital opportunities.

Projects worth £3million have been approved by the UK Government as an initial allocation of City-Region Deal funding. This will be used to fund the upgrading of access to Inverness Castle's North Tower and to create a free public access Wi-Fi scheme for the City of Inverness to increase digital connectivity, progress the "smart cities" initiative and enhance the visitor economy.

A City-Region Deal would bring enormous economic benefits for both the City and the wider economy of the Highlands. The Council, in partnership with Highlands and Islands Enterprise, has appointed a team to help develop a bid document. This will set out detailed business cases and quantify the economic benefits to the Highlands.

## #City-RegionDeal





# Regional Sports Facility

## Regional Sports Facility to be designed and costed

Highland Council has agreed funding of up to £150,000 to develop detailed designs and costings for a Regional Sports Facility, which could come to fruition as part of a City-Region Deal.

The project planning is to be taken forward in line with the Council's Programme commitment to work with partners to progress the delivery of a regional sports facility for the Highlands in Inverness incorporating indoor cycling, tennis and athletics as part of our aim of promoting the Highlands as a great place to live, work and visit.

Councillors agreed in March 2015 to progress an ambitious Regional Sports Facility for the Highlands, which could include a significant contribution by SportScotland of £5 million to the project.

SportScotland launched a funding programme several years ago, for the development of regional sports facilities in strategic locations across Scotland, to create facilities which would enable athletes to progress to performance level.

A feasibility study by Porteous Leisure, commissioned through High Life Highland, considered the capital costs, potential sources of funding, an estimated revenue budget, potential uses and the interests and requirements of key stakeholders, partners and sponsors.

In addition to core indoor facilities for athletics, gymnastics, judo and tennis, the study proposes a major velodrome facility, which would put a Highland facility on a par with the top regional facilities in the UK.

The study examined potential sites and has recommended The Bught site option, which adds to existing leisure facilities at Inverness Leisure and offers best value in economic and sporting terms.

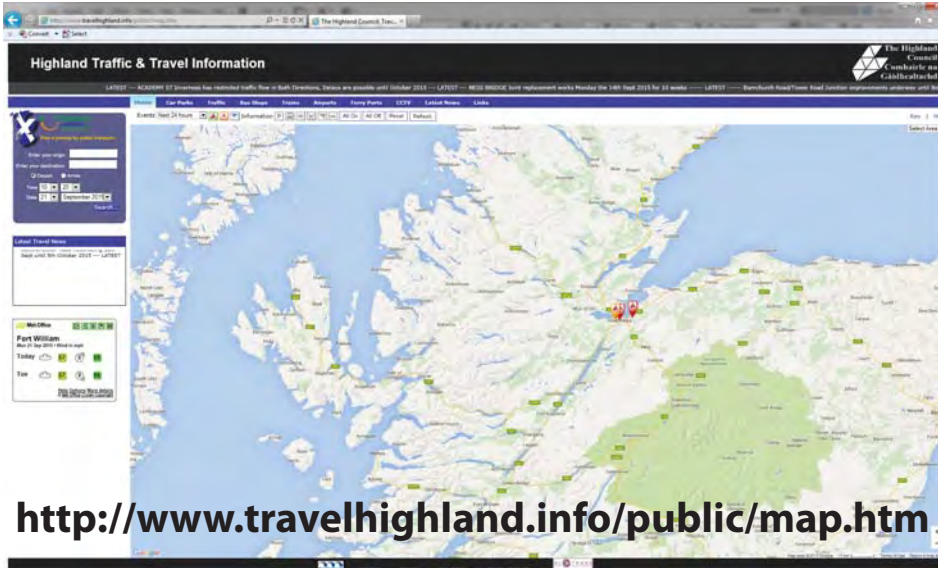
The estimated capital cost of the Regional Sports Centre at current prices would be around £23.1 million. Inflation will be factored into the detailed design stage. Members have agreed that potential sources of funding should be approached.



# New traffic & travel website

A traffic and travel website has been developed in partnership with HITRANS to deliver real time passenger information to the public. The website was developed as a result of Capital funding from The Highland Council and HITRANS.

The provision of useful real time traffic information is important in rural areas, where public transport is less frequent and journey times are longer.



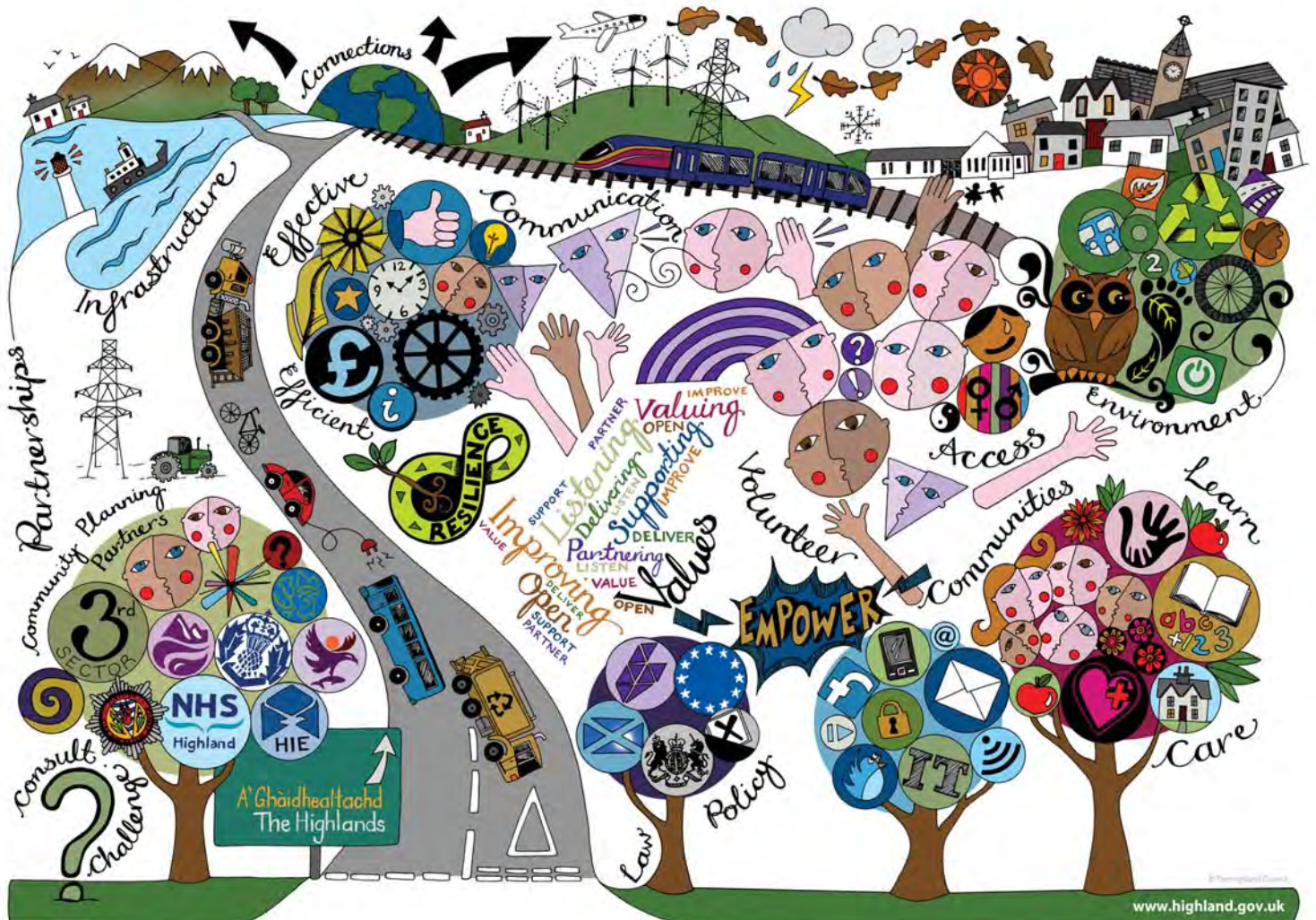
The travel website which can be found on the Council website is fed by data from a range of sources, including external websites, data from webcams, traffic, car parking data, transport hub information, real time bus stop information and a link to Traffic Scotland.

Additional information is added, including planned road works.

<http://www.travelhighland.info/public/map.htm>

# The Rich Picture

Describing the varied work of the Council in picture form.



# Preventative approach to Poverty & Debt

Impact assessments relating to measures in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill estimate that affected UK households will lose an average of £63 per week in 2017/18.

Rising employment in the UK between 2009 and 2014 coincided with falls in real earnings reducing the income of working families, with the proportion of children in poverty in working families increasing from 54% to 63% in this period. These two contrasting trends led to absolute child poverty remaining unchanged overall in this period. In addition to this household debt has soared in recent years, impacting further on poverty.

Statistics show that 5,420 children in 2,980 households in the Highland Council area are living in an "out-of-work benefit" household.

A number of anti-poverty initiatives are being taken forward by the Council's Welfare Reform Working Group. These initiatives include money and welfare advice, school clothing grants, and assistance with Alternative Payment Requests for those with rent arrears.

A preventative approach has been adopted within the Highlands to try and address the cycle of debt and poverty. Demand for Council funded advice and information continues to increase. Over 7,700 people presenting with nearly £21 million of debt were assisted by these services during 2014/15.

A Facebook chat was held in June with staff from the Council's Money Advice team. 60 people took part and the event reached

3,500 people. Money advice staff reported: "We've had some really positive feedback from a customer today who was following our Facebook session. She advised us that this gave her the courage to contact us regarding her situation which had been causing her mental ill health over a prolonged period."

In June 2015, 89.5% of the 124 Highland Council Tenants, who are known to receive Universal Credit, were in arrears with their rent.

Since May, Community Services has made 23 requests to the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) for Alternative Payment Arrangements, so that the housing costs will be paid direct to the Council.

Members also agreed to increase the School Clothing Grant award to £81 in May 2015 and the use of PayPoint allows an immediate payment to be sent to the applicant.

Chair of the Council's Resources Committee, Cllr Bill Fernie said: "The Council established a Welfare Fund of £1.67 million last year and this has enabled a range of initiatives to help people. We have £0.649 million left in the fund for this year and we will be identifying how we can best target this to help reduce the impact of poverty on our communities."

The Head of Revenues and Business Support has been invited to give evidence to the Scottish Parliament's Welfare Reform Committee in October which will contribute to the consultation on the future delivery of social security in Scotland.



Two updated publications, including "An essential guide to benefits, money advice, energy advice and other support 2015/16" and a "Funeral Guide" have been produced to assist a wide range of people.

These can be found on the Council website: [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

Further Highland Council Welfare Fund projects approved during 2014/15 include:

- Maximising Benefit Take-up Project – this project seeks to identify customers with potential entitlement to additional benefit
- Midwifery Project – offering welfare/money advice to new and expectant mothers
- Mental Health Project – Provision of advice services delivered by the Citizens' Advice Bureau in partnership with health and social care professionals, to increase levels of income, avoid homelessness, and reduce anxiety

# Community Empowerment

(Scotland) Act 2015

**The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Bill was passed in June 2015 and received Royal Assent in July.**

The Act will come into effect in July 2016 and places new duties on the Council and its partners, including reducing socio-economic inequality and provides new rights for community bodies.

The Act provides a framework for empowering communities through community control of land and buildings; meaningful community participation in public services, including decisions about the allocation of resources; and making community planning a statutory duty for more public bodies.

## **Strengthening local democracy in the Highlands**

Highland Council has agreed to replace two Area Committees with four new Local Forums for community planning and local decision-making and scrutiny for Councillors and for local community planning if partners agree to take part. The two Area Committees covering Caithness and Sutherland and Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey will be disbanded and established as four new separate local community planning forums.

It is proposed that Skye would have similar separate arrangements from Ross and Cromarty, following further discussions. Lochaber will continue with an evolutionary approach to change, retaining the Area Committee and a separate local community planning partnership.

Council business in the new local community planning forums would be focussed on decision making, local scrutiny, partnership business and public engagement. It is envisaged that there should be devolved control over Community Services budgets (unless there is a strong case for aspects not to be decided locally) engaging communities in deciding local spending priorities.

The new arrangements will evolve over time to support the implementation of new legal duties arising from the Community Empowerment Act. There will be further discussions with community planning partners on the partnership elements of the new forums and the feedback from these will be reported to Council in October. Inverness City Committee will continue in its current form at present but this may change depending on Members' views.



# Participatory Budgeting

## COMMUNITIES TO HAVE THEIR SAY ON HOW MONEY IS SPENT LOCALLY

People across the Highlands are getting the opportunity to decide on how money is spent locally to bring benefits to people living in their local communities as part of a pilot project we are running.

Lochaber Councillors have made £10,000 available for distribution to a range of groups, clubs and projects that support young people aged between 11-25 years old. A total of 42 applications were received from community groups and organisations for a share of the £10,000 pot.

A public vote took place from the 14th to 20th September giving people living in Lochaber the chance to vote for their favourite projects. Panels of pupils from the four secondary schools in Lochaber are currently ranking the bids. Their selection will have a 25% weighting on the total votes cast in order to make sure young people a strong voting voice. The results of the successful projects will be announced on Wednesday 23rd September.

Nairn and Badenoch and Strathspey are also drawing up plans for their communities to be involved next year, in deciding how local funds are spent.

Meanwhile in Caithness the "Your Cash Your Caithness" campaign was launched last week inviting community and voluntary groups across the north the chance to apply for funding from a £30,000 pot from the Caithness Ward Discretionary Budget to put their ideas into action.

Whether you want to organise a dance for young people, a healthy living project, a crime prevention idea, a lunch club for older residents, a community art project, all ideas, large and small are welcome for up to £3,000 of support in Caithness.

Applications must be submitted before 5pm on Monday 19 October. If your idea fits, the community will get the opportunity to vote for the best ideas at a special event to be held on Saturday 21st November 2015 in the Pulteney Centre, in Wick.

Application forms can be accessed online from:

**[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)** or by contacting:

~ **CAITHNESS VOLUNTARY GROUP** ~

Email: **[Yvonne@CVG.org.uk](mailto:Yvonne@CVG.org.uk)** - Phone: **01955609960**

~ **SINCLAIR BAY COMMUNITY COUNCIL** ~

Email: **[Kimberley\\_spiers@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:Kimberley_spiers@hotmail.co.uk)** - Phone: **07557918564**



# Dementia Friendly Highland

There are presently 90,000 people in Scotland with Dementia. This includes over 4200 people with dementia in Highland. Members of the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee signed up to becoming a Dementia Friend at their meeting in June 2015.

Councillors heard about Alzheimer Scotland's Dementia Friendly Community initiative and Advisors Fiona Dendy and Geraldine Ditta delivered some training to members, before participants were presented with their official Dementia Friends badges.

A Dementia Friend learns a little bit more about what it's like to live with dementia and then turns that understanding into action.

Anyone can become a Dementia Friend. Scotland now has over 10,000 Dementia Friends who have signed up to support people with dementia in their communities.

Alzheimer Scotland is currently working with The Highland Council, Inverness BID, NHS Highland, Inverness Chamber of Commerce, the local District Partnership and others to make Inverness a Dementia Friendly city.



*Centre driver Gordon Urquhart (middle) with Woodlands service users Bill MacLennan (left) and Rev. Arthur Fraser.*

During Demetia Awareness Week in June, Alzheimer Scotland took the Dementia Friendly Inverness campaign to the High Street with over 40 shops and businesses displaying posters and making commitments to support the initiative.

Geraldine Ditta, who is based in the Inverness Dementia Resource Centre in Inverness, said: "Our aim is to develop a dementia friendly community and support people to live well with dementia." Anybody can become a Scottish Dementia Friend. It's just about understanding a bit more about

dementia and the small things you can do to help people with the condition. This could be helping someone find the right bus or being patient in a till queue, if someone with dementia is taking longer to pay."

The Council's Learning and Development Team have carried out Dementia Awareness training for a number of years and held a training session for Members and staff on 28 August. It is planned to extend the invitation to staff working in service points and housing and to consider further training across Highland.



*Alzheimer Scotland's Head of Operations Campbell Mair with Leader of the Council Margaret Davidson and Cllr Hamish Fraser.*

Since June many people have signed up to become Dementia friends, including 9 Optometrists, 33 Librarians, 21 Scottish Ambulance staff, 66 S6 school pupils of the Inverness Royal Academy, 10 Alzheimer Scotland volunteers, 14 planning officers/ council staff involved in the Victorian Market, 24 Boleskine care staff and people in their community.

Dementia Advisor, Geraldine Ditta said, "I carried out a Dementia Friends session at a Librarian development day in June for 33 librarians.

One of these librarians, now a Dementia Friend went back to her workplace in Inverness Royal Academy where, by promoting Dementia Friends with her colleagues, she was able to set up a session within the school for S6 pupils in August.

This is a really good example of how Dementia Friends can help people talk more freely about dementia, encourage more people to become dementia friends and help their communities work towards being a dementia friendly community."

### **Anybody can become a Scottish Dementia Friend**

To become a dementia friend or to find out more contact:

**Dementia Friendly Community**

**[www.dementiafriendsscotland.org](http://www.dementiafriendsscotland.org)**

or contact the Dementia resource Centre in Inverness on:

**01463 711 707** or email: **[highlanddrc@alzscot.org](mailto:highlanddrc@alzscot.org)**



*Members of the Community Safety, Public Engagement and Equalities Committee sign up to becoming a Dementia Friend.*

# Community Council Elections

This September is your opportunity to get involved in the community by becoming a member of your local Community Council.

Community Councils bridge the gap between local communities and the Council and act as a voice for their local area. They deal with issues affecting communities like new buildings and roads, local services or sport and leisure facilities.

Every four years there is an election where a new Community Council is formed. There will be an election this year and so we would like to encourage people to come forward to be part of their local Community Council. If you want to find out a bit more about what being a community councillor involves you can contact your local ward manager for more information (search for 'Ward Managers' at [www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)).

Anyone can become a member of their Community Council provided they are:

- Over 16 years old
- Live within the specified boundary

- Are on the electoral register within the boundary (16 and 17 year olds need to be on the Supplementary Register for Community Council elections. For more information and a registration form please visit [www.highland.gov.uk/communitycouncils](http://www.highland.gov.uk/communitycouncils)).

If you are interested in becoming a Community Councillor, you can nominate yourself between Monday 21st September and Tuesday 6th October 2015.

Nomination forms will be available on the Council's website or from your Ward Manager.

If there are more nominations than places on the Community Council then there will be an election ballot in that local area.

If you're interested you can find out more information, including which Community Council area you live in, on the Highland Council website at:  
[www.highland.gov.uk/communitycouncils](http://www.highland.gov.uk/communitycouncils)

## ARE YOU #IN?

16 and 17 year olds in Scotland can now vote at Scottish elections, including Scottish Parliamentary and local government elections.



This month the council is supporting the national Are You #In campaign. As well as the national TV and radio adverts that are currently running, Facebook and Twitter are being used to spread the word.

Highland secondary schools are taking part in the "Time Out To Get In" registering event, where teachers will help their 15-17 year old students register during class time.

**66% of 16 & 17 year olds registered to vote at the referendum**

You can register to vote online at [gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://gov.uk/register-to-vote)



# Highland's new Youth Convener

Kat Bateson from Inverness has been appointed to the role of Highland Youth Convener. This full time role, based at the High Life Highland office in Ardross Street, Inverness, is a bursary position running to the end of August 2016.



*Welcoming Kat to her new role and wishing Shaun good luck are Highland Council Leader, Cllr Margaret Davidson and the Highland Council Convener, Cllr Isobel McCallum*

As Youth Convener, Kat provides a consistent link for Elected Members and senior officials in The Highland Council, representing young people's views and will act as a sounding board for youth issues in the Highlands. Kat will attend Council and Community Planning Partner meetings and has full voting rights on the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee and speaking rights at all other Council Committees.

The Youth Convener works closely with young people across the Highlands through Highland Youth Voice, Area Youth Forums and Pupil Councils in Secondary Schools. Kat will maintain the links between organisations and partners already established by previous Youth Conveners and will be seeking to develop new connections with organisations across the Highlands.

Ian Murray Chief Executive of High Life Highland explained: "The role of the Youth Convener is pivotal, representing young people in different settings and at different levels of decision making to ensure the views of young people are heard across the Highlands. Kat will be working alongside our youth development team and I look forward to seeing the good work being developed over the coming year."

Kat who is the ninth Highland Youth Convener and takes over from Shaun Finlayson said: "I am delighted to have been chosen as the new Youth Convener and I look forward to continuing Shaun's good work and putting forward my own perspective for improving the lives of young people in the Highlands."

Leader of The Highland Council, Councillor Margaret Davidson welcomed Kat into her role saying: "The Youth Convener post is unique in Scotland and is part of our commitment to better understand and engage with issues important to Highland's young people. Kat takes over this important role at an exciting time as 16 and 17 year olds can now vote at Scottish elections, including local government elections and the up-coming community council elections. It's very important young voices are heard and to make sure their fresh ideas and different opinions are well represented. I am sure Kat will enjoy the challenges and will be able to use her skills in the role and I look forward to working with her over the coming year."

Kat can be contacted on: **01463 663827**  
or email: **[youth.convener@highlifehighland.com](mailto:youth.convener@highlifehighland.com)**

## Polling Recruitment

### **Recruitment of Polling and Count Staff for forthcoming Elections**

Have you ever thought of getting involved at election time by either working at a polling station or at the count? Our Elections Team is always looking for new people to help us, and would love to hear from you if you are interested in becoming involved. We are always looking to recruit motivated and dynamic staff to fill any vacancies that occur.

For more information please visit:

**[www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections\\_and\\_voting](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections_and_voting) and complete the online application form.**

# Into the Blue

## Did you know that you can now recycle more items than ever before in your blue bin?

We have introduced a new service so as well as paper, cardboard, food tins, drink cans and plastic bottles, you can now also put **aerosols, envelopes, cardboard food and drink cartons, plastic pots, tubs and loose plastic bottle tops** in your blue bin.

Just make sure all items are rinsed to remove any traces of food. Black plastic trays, pots and tubs cannot be included as there is no ready market for the material just now, but all other colours are accepted.

You should have received your copy of the new recycling guide we have distributed, which not only explains the new service but also contains lots of other handy information on reducing waste, reusing and recycling.

If you haven't received it you can get a copy by contacting:  
**01349 886603**  
or email: [recycle@highland.gov.uk](mailto:recycle@highland.gov.uk)



# Doors Open

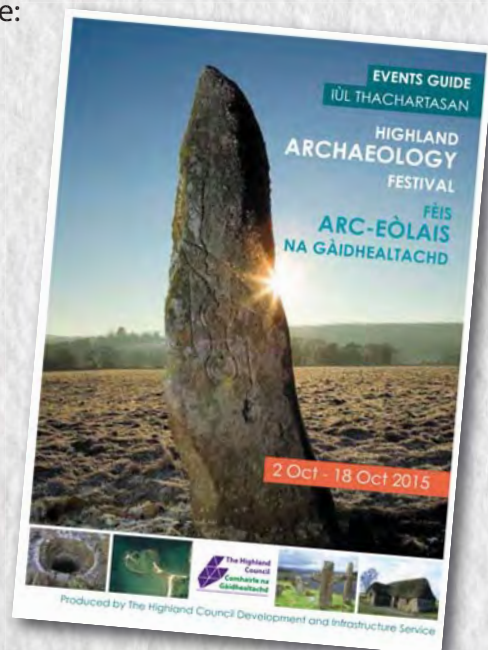
Buildings, new and old, have opened their doors this month to allow the public to see inside them and find out about their stories.

The first Doors Open Days weekend featured buildings in and around Inverness and Badenoch and Strathspey. The second weekend featured historic buildings in the Black Isle, Easter Ross, East Sutherland and Wester Ross, including Cromarty Courthouse, Cromarty Lighthouse, Ullapool Museum and Gairloch Heritage Museum. The third weekend of September, focussed on Caithness & Nairn.

There are still plenty more venues to visit including historic churches, castles, museums and heritage centres. On 26th-27th September the spotlight is on Lochaber and Badenoch & Strathspey. Glencoe Folk Museum, Kinlochleven Powerhouse, Lochaber Powerhouse, Fort William, Nevis Radio studio, Am Fasgadh, Highland Folk Museum, Newtonmore will all be open to the public.

# Archaeology Fortnight 2015

Highland Archaeology fortnight takes place from 2nd to 18th October. Download a copy of the guide from here:



[www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15088/highland\\_archaeology\\_2015\\_-\\_events\\_guide](http://www.highland.gov.uk/downloads/file/15088/highland_archaeology_2015_-_events_guide)

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# Seashore Summer Success

People of all ages across the Highlands have been enjoying learning more about their local environment thanks to a range of activities and events run by the Highland Seashore Project. The Project, funded by The Highland Council, The Crown estate, Scottish Natural Heritage and The Heritage Lottery Fund was launched in 2013 as a three-year initiative to get local communities out on their shores and appreciate the uniqueness of our Highland Coasts.

Our Countryside Rangers lend their support and have helped to deliver eight regional arts festivals covering the seven coastal regions of Caithness, Sutherland, Easter Ross, Wester Ross, Skye & Lochalsh, Lochaber, and Inverness & Nairn. These Festivals have reflected the local communities' unique histories and heritage and they have included ceilidhs with local musicians, songs, poems, stories and artwork that have been inspired by the sea and coast.

## Here is a round-up of just some of the highlights

The Sea to Summit Project is an arts project involving Lochaber schools and highlights the connections between the mountains and the seashores that characterise Lochaber. The 3D map by pupils from Caol, Banavie and Inverlochry primary schools was completed at the Glenuig Seashore festival, as part of the Wild Lochaber Festival on 30th July.



Nevis Partnership The Sea to Summit map at the West Highland Museum

The Highland Seashore project worked with Lynn Brydon of the Easter Ross Environment Group to bring the Seashore to Dingwall in July. Highlight of the day were busking group Slim Pantells performing Sea Shanties, artists Paddy Luc and Beads demonstrating their crafts, marine tales with storyteller Bob Pegg, and sea themed music.



The buskers Slim Pantells © Janet Ullman

A whole day of this new Summer Isles Festival on the last weekend of August in Achiltibuie, was dedicated to seashore events, songs and shows with the support of the Highland Seashore project and the Highland Council Ranger Service.

Making instruments out of beach rubbish with Trash the Orchestra, beach magic with Mr Clive, Roddy Maclean with traditional Highland tales, marine Biologist Mike Kendall with some weird animal stories and mosaic art sessions were enjoyed by the public at the Seashore Saturday in Nairn on 5th September.

The Highland Seashore summer events ends with a week long festival - Wick Waves 21st – 26th September. This week of free coastal festivities brings together the exploration of the huge diversity of life on the coast; the influence the coast has had on shaping Wick its self and local art, books, food, music and sport.

To find out more go to:  
[www.highlandseashore.org.uk](http://www.highlandseashore.org.uk)

# Summer in the City

Inverness was packed with festivities on Saturday, 27th June to celebrate the beauty of the Riverside and the completion of phase one of the River Ness Flood Alleviation works.

A riverside party which centred on Huntly Street featured activities and attractions for the whole family, including Fly Agaric Stilt Walkers, face painting, a bouncy castle, spray paint artistry, Highland Dancers and a visit from Princess Ariel. The Moray Firth Radio Street Team provided musical entertainment, while the Cash for Kids team helped children to become their inner superhero with the help of "green screen" special effects.

Visitors were treated to musical treats by Fiddle Forte and an exhibition on about the kilt-making process in the Highland House of Fraser.

Elsewhere in the city centre, Zombie-themed festivities took place with face-painting and a treasure hunt before a gathering at the castle.



Artist Mary Bourne has been in Inverness during the summer carving poems into the flood wall and on the new pavements by the River Ness in Bank Street and Huntly Street. This marks the start of the programme of artworks commissioned for the riverside redevelopment associated with the flood wall.

Mary Bourne was commissioned to investigate "River Connections" - how the River Ness has influenced the development of Inverness and how it connects the people there to their history. Mary held an "open day" on Monday 14th September so the public could go along and see her work in action.

This is the first of six projects which have been commissioned for the River Ness Public Art project. The other projects are the Gathering Place, the Sculptural Destination, Rest Spaces, the Trail and the Children's Riverside Feature, which were launched in May 2015.

The project is funded by City of Inverness Common Good Fund, Creative Scotland, HIE and the Highland Council and managed by the Inverness City Arts Working Group.



# Belladrum Superheroes

This year's Belladrum was the most sustainable yet and achieved its goal of sending zero waste to landfill, thanks in part to the efforts of a team of Environmental Superheroes organised by the Highland Council's Carbon CLEVER initiative and Pat Munro Waste Services.

The team, in their bright white t-shirts and superhero capes, patrolled the campsites and arena, handing out bin bags and rewards to festival goers, demonstrating Carbon CLEVER behaviours and summoning those caught being naughty to the Carbon Court.

The Environmental Superheroes handed out well over 200 goody bags to people who had done their bit, and only had one appearance at the Carbon Court over the course of the weekend. As the final festival goers left the site over 81.13 tonnes of waste was left, and the hard work began. The clear up process took 7 full days, with solid litter picking completed by over 40 dedicated picking staff.

Bulky items including over 60 tents, 90 sleeping bags and mats and 85 camping chairs were sorted, cleaned and sold on by Muir of Ord Scouts with over £500 being raised.

The Indigo Project-Gambia Charity also took away 15 tents to recycle and sell on, with the remainder being donated to the local collection currently taking place for the refugees at Calais.



All the cardboard, paper, plastic and metals (ferrous and non-ferrous) were extracted through sorting lines and recovered for recycling at Pat Munro's state of the art facility in Alness. All other non-recyclable waste, including food, clothes and poor grade/contaminated plastic packaging was sent to Pat Munro's waste partners, Binn Eco Park in Perth and was subject to their Energy from Waste Process.



Keith Masson, Policy Coordinator: Climate Change at the Council said...

“ The Environmental Superheroes and Pat Munro's staff have done a fantastic job. They promoted the zero waste to landfill message really well and we had nothing but positive feedback from festival goers. Hopefully this can now become the norm for other festivals across the country. ”



Milestones and memories will be the hallmark of the 11th Blas festival which took place at venues across the Highlands and Argyll between 4th and 12th September.

Now entering its second decade as one of Scotland's leading music festivals, Blas 2015 assembled a stellar line-up of some of the best musicians and singers to celebrate Highland culture.

Established 11 years ago, as a result of The Highland Council's desire to create a festival that would match the vitality of Cape Breton's Celtic Colours, the Council has continued its support of Blas.

It is now an international event that showcases Highland culture and its continuing success has been welcomed by the Scottish Government and Highland Council.

Blas Festival Director, Donna Macrae, said: "This year's programme was packed with a notable series of events marking special anniversaries and milestones enhanced by a 'blas' of Scottish produce in this year celebrating food and drink. Fèisean nan Gàidheal, which delivers Blas, saw some of its own members in that category.

Fèis Spè celebrated its 25th anniversary as do the Kiltearn Fiddlers, established under the auspices of Fèis Rois.

World-renowned band Shoogenlifty marked their own 25th anniversary at The Ironworks in Inverness on September 5th with Hò-ro and Niteworks."

# Blas Festival 2015

They all have a bit to go before they match the 70th birthday celebrations thrown to mark renowned singer Anne Lorne Gillies' major milestone. Friends and associates, who have shared stages and experiences with Anne over the years, came together to celebrate a distinguished career both here and on the other side of the Atlantic.

Few bands have had a bigger influence on Gaelic song than Runrig. The songs, written by founder member brothers Calum and Rory MacDonald, featured in a specially commissioned event "Òran: A celebration of the songs of Runrig" was the Grand Finale of Blas 2015.

Calum MacDonald, Runrig founder and drummer said: "The Blas Festival is without doubt one of the most iconic events in the traditional music success story of recent times. Exciting, varied, vibrant, international, yet completely rooted in the Highland, Gaelic psyche. It is therefore a huge honour for the band to have our music performed at the finale of the 2015 Festival, and particularly gratifying for us to see some of our songs slip back into that tradition - a tradition to which we owe so much."



# - flying high over milestones

Few of the anniversaries being marked this year will, however, be as poignant as the “Shinty’s Heroes: The Pipes Come Home” concert being held in the Phipps Hall, Beauly on the opening night, Friday September 4.

In the centenary year of the infamous Battle of Festubert, when hundreds of Highland soldiers lost their lives, a set of pipes belonging to a notable shinty player from Beauly, Donald Paterson, killed by a sniper in the battle, will return to Beauly to be played by Duncan MacGillivray of Calrossie as part of a unique commemoration.



© Image courtesy of Highland Photographic Archive/Highland Folk Museum/ Am Baile

The Blas Festival has enjoyed significant support from Highlands and Islands Airports Limited (HIAL) for some years, with the Inverness Airport restaurant having been the venue for concerts and a Blas Ball. Musicians have frequently played short sessions within the airport concourse throughout the festival.

The fourth 2015 Scottish Traditional Music Hall of Fame Dinner was hosted by Hands Up for Trad, in partnership with Blas, on September 11th. This celebration at Inverness Airport acknowledged the 2015 inductees to the Hall and featured music from Rona Lightfoot and UHI students.

The 2015 Programme showcased Gaelic and traditional music in a wide variety of venues and locations across the Highlands and Argyll.

Chair of The Highland Council’s Gaelic Implementation Group, Councillor Hamish Fraser said:

**“ We are very proud of the Blas Festival which was originally initiated by the Council 11 years ago. Since 2005 it has developed to become bigger and better but has still managed to maintain, at its heart, the original charm and uniqueness which sees internationally acclaimed artists share the stage with home grown young musical talent. Audiences continue to be drawn here to the Highlands from around the world. ”**





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# Orienteering



Thousands of international athletes recently pitted their 'cunning running' skills against each other at the 2015 World Orienteering Championships and Scottish Orienteering 6-Day Event.

A huge thanks goes out to all the volunteers who helped make these events a great success.

## It's a Wrap for Inverness Town House



A pictorial building wrap was installed this summer to cover scaffolding on the building's High Street frontage and west-side on Castle Wynd.

The renovation works will continue on the historic category A-listed building over the next two years.

Laing Traditional Masonry is employing apprentices on the project which will help to ensure that traditional skills are passed on.

## Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar

The Highland Council's new Gaelic Primary School, Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar, located in Caol, Fort William opened to pupils in August. Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Loch Abar is the first of four new primary schools and a community centre facility for the Fort William area, which provide not only outstanding education facilities, but also excellent opportunities for community access and use.

Chair of the Education, Children and Adult Services Committee, Councillor Drew Millar said: "The development of the Gaelic language and culture will be greatly enhanced by this new Gaelic Primary School. Bilingual education has been widely acknowledged as having wider educational benefits and this facility will also help to develop and sustain the Gaelic language amongst young people in the area."



## Sign up now to **myaccount**

Over 1,400 Highland residents have now signed up for Highland Council's myaccount customer portal since its launch in April. The new portal allows customers to:

- Have a single sign-on for all council online services
- Save forms for completion later
- Automatically populate forms with their details
- Use the same login for local public services when they move to a new part of Scotland
- Get trusted access to council services that require evidence of identity

The portal is accessed through the myaccount button on the Highland Council Website.

If you haven't signed up for myaccount yet, register and log in using your personal email address (please do not use Highland Council email addresses) to access all Highland Council online services.

Got a Young Scot card or Travel Card? Then you will already have an account set up. Just enter your 16 digit card number and confirm your details.

Other users can create an account using a simple process and have their details verified with Scottish Government records.

# Online forms

## New Online Forms Launched

The Digital First Programme launched three new online forms in July:

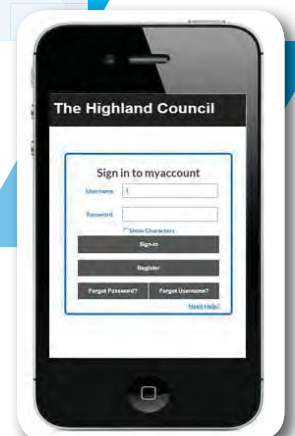
- Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions – apply for reductions to your council tax as a result of your domestic, education or property status.
- Change of Circumstances – report a change of address or situation that may impact on housing benefit, council tax reduction or council tax.
- Disabled Band Reduction – apply for a reduction in your council tax if your home has certain adaptations for a person with a disability

The new forms were used over 200 times in the first month which is really encouraging and we hope this number will continue to grow.

New functionality has also been launched that allows customers to submit evidence electronically. Customers can now attach scans or photographs of evidence to their online form, rather than having to produce original copies at our service points or through the post. This will help customers to complete forms anytime, anywhere, on any device. Highland Council is one of the first councils in Scotland to offer this ability. It is only available on the three new forms, but it will be rolled out further as more new forms come online. These forms take the number of available online forms to over 60.

Sign in with

**mygovscot**  
myaccount



The portal is accessed through **Myaccount** which appears on the top right of the homepage of our website: [www.highland.gov.uk/myaccount](http://www.highland.gov.uk/myaccount)

# Preparing for winter

Severe weather can strike at any time, so taking action now will serve you well in winter, and all year round.

In the last few years, we've had snow, floods and strong winds. And it doesn't take much for it to impact on our daily lives. Like getting stuck indoors for a few days, or losing your phone communication, power or water supply.

Severe weather can cause a range of problems - but you can be ready for them. By doing a few small things now, you can save yourself a lot of trouble later on.

You can also do your bit to help out in your community. In previous years, severe weather left some people vulnerable. Helping each other a little can make a big difference.

Here's how you can play your part in making your community more prepared:

- Identify family members or neighbours who may need an extra helping hand if severe weather strikes.
- Have useful phone numbers to hand.
- Offer to help with grocery shopping or other essential tasks.
- Clear ice or snow from pathways.
- Volunteer to help others by visiting:  
**[www.volunteerscotland.org.uk](http://www.volunteerscotland.org.uk)**
- If you are part of a community group, think about what your group can do to help others during bad weather.
- See examples of how communities across Scotland are working together to get ready for winter/severe weather.

A good starting point is the Scottish Government's Guide to Emergency Planning for Community Groups, which suggests a range of things that you and others in your area could do and has templates for household and community plans.

The Ready Scotland website has information on this and lots of other useful information on preparing for severe weather.

<http://www.readyscotland.org/are-you-ready/winter-weather/>

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