

Highpoints Sàr Phuingean

The truth about toilets Pg8

Heading for the Highlands
- the tourist boom Pg4

Discover the HighlandAR
Legends, innovative app
brings augmented reality
to the city Pg14



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Contact us

Write to:

**Corporate Communications
The Highland Council HQ
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness IV3 5NX**

Email: corporate.communications@highland.gov.uk

Phone: 01463 702020

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Bill Lobban
Highland Council Convener

Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of our Highpoints magazine.

Never has the Highlands been so popular as a tourist destination. The value of Sterling, the long spell of great weather and the safety of the Highlands, together with the success of the NC500 are all contributory factors. However, the friendly welcome, our rich heritage, breath-taking scenery, national parks and unique cultural offerings, makes people fall in love with our beautiful region and will mean visitors will keep coming back for more.

This issue of Highpoints highlights a range of initiatives underway to support improvements to tourist infrastructure and some of the vast range of attractions we have on offer.

Improvements to parking, paths, roads and other facilities are benefiting both tourists and locals in many areas. Successful events such as the Mountain Bike World Cup,

Belladrum Tartan Heart Festival, the Highland Games and the Black Isle Show are all going from strength to strength. The Archaeology Festival begins in September and we are delighted to be welcoming the European Pipe Band Championships to Inverness and the Gaelic Media Awards to Aviemore next year. Our beaches continue to attract major awards and we have (yes) the best public toilet provision in the UK!

An innovative new app which uses augmented reality to bring local legends to life in a trail of eight artworks across Inverness is already proving to be a major hit with tourists and tour guides. This is also helped by the free Wi-Fi which we now have in Inverness and all our major towns across the Highlands – a tremendous resource for visitors, businesses and local communities.

Highland is truly one of the most attractive places to visit, live and do business, in the world.



Unveiling of the 8th plaque of HighlandAR Legends at Falcon Square with Jackie Cuddy and Darroch McNaught

Listening ~ Open ~ Valuing ~ Improving ~ Supporting ~ Partnering ~ Delivering

Highland Archaeology Festival

Fèis Arc-eòlais na Gàidhealtachd

29th September to 19th October 2018

Photo © Philip Murray

Walks | Talks | Conference | Adopt an HER record



Photographic Competition

Geocache trails



Highland Archaeology Festival
Fèis Arc-eòlais na Gàidhealtachd

Further details at our website

www.highlandarchaeologyfestival.org

or pick up a programme from Libraries or Service Points

Heading for the Highlands

Things to do in the Highlands

www.highland.gov.uk/tourism

Colin Simpson, Highland Council's Principal Tourism and Film Officer describes a range of initiatives to address Highland's growing tourism industry.

The last few tourist seasons have been good ones for Highland tourism with certain destinations and some individual sites seeing marked rises in visitor numbers. In particular, a number of natural sites have seen significant increases that have led to pressures on infrastructure such as single track roads, parking and toilet facilities. An increase in the number of motorhomes, some of which commonly overnight informally outside recognised sites has also created a need for further facilities such as for waste disposal. In many cases these pressures have created expectations that the Council would address the issue, even where it is not the site owner.

In Autumn 2017 the Scottish Government launched a Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund - totalling £6m of capital over 2 years to help improve such infrastructure. Only Local Authorities and National Park Authorities can bid to the fund although a wider range of

partners can deliver projects. All projects must be able to demonstrate community support and must address an existing tourism pressure, rather than developing new tourism facilities.

The Highland Council submitted 12 Expressions of Interest in the first round, most of which progressed to full applications which will be considered by the first formal assessment panel in September.

The range of projects being proposed include increased car or coach parking and related traffic and parking management at some key destinations such as Portree, Fort Augustus, Invergordon and Glenfinnan, Public convenience improvements or improved motorhome facilities on Skye and in the Arisaig, Morar and Mallaig area.

In some cases the Council will lead a project, for example where it relates to the extension of an existing Council car park but in other cases the local community is taking the lead with the intention of both addressing existing pressures while also creating a community facility that could generate further income for wider community projects.

The Storr

Thanks to international marketing and social media, the Isle of Skye has seen a vast increase in visitor numbers over recent years. First amongst the natural features that has rocketed in terms of visitor numbers is the Storr, which has seen a 600% increase in just 10 years. The current infrastructure at the site was not built to cope with this dramatic increase and has led to negative publicity about Skye in national and international press, with CNN Travel recently ranking Skye number 1 in the 'top 12 places to avoid in 2018' list.

The value of tourism to Skye is estimated at £133M (2016) however this negative publicity could be detrimental to this. To avoid visitors being deterred from visiting the island any further, The Highland Council has applied for funding to improve the infrastructure at several hotspots. The Old Man of Storr improvement plan was sent as an application to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund that was announced by Scottish government in 2017. The application has been accepted for Phase 1 and will see plans go ahead in the very near future, with The Highland Council contributing £200K, another





£300K from LEADER funding, and £300K from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund.

The plan involves expansion to the car park and to improve facilities by adding things such as public toilets and litter disposal points. A number of designs have been produced with the preferred option costing £750,000, if the funding can be found. To ensure future sustainability the Council proposes charging visitors for use of the carpark which would allow investment in the parking facilities and other related infrastructure such as paths.

The improvements will vastly reduce the congestion in the area at peak times, and have benefits for visitors by car, coach, bus, on foot, by bike and incorporate accessibility needs for all.

By tackling the safety and congestion issues we hope that visitors and local residents will have much more positive experiences.

By improving facilities at the Old Man of Storr the value of tourism to Skye will not only increase from income generated from the parking spaces having an economic impact, but also from the effects that will diffuse visitor tension and provide a better attraction, which in turn, impact positively on visitor satisfaction surveys which help boost the value of tourism for the island.

Hotel investment

The last few years have seen quite significant levels of hotel building in some of the UK's bigger cities including Glasgow and Edinburgh but more recently the level of interest in Inverness has picked up. This interest was boosted in 2017 when international commercial property experts Colliers International ranked Inverness as the most attractive market for investors in their inaugural Scottish Hotel Index. A mix of strong levels of demand, rising rates and occupancy levels as well as relatively low development costs has increased Inverness's profile as a 'hot spot' for hotel development.

Through attendance at a number of investment events in locations including Edinburgh and London, the Council has promoted the city as well to potential investors and operators. As well as interest in city centre sites

including the Glebe Street site soon to be developed, there has been interest in the Inverness Campus and Inverness airport for further hotel developments. Council officers have also taken the opportunity at such events to promote other areas of Highland, including Lochaber and Caithness, where the increased numbers of visitors coming to tour the North Coast 500 have influenced demand.

Mountain Bike World Cup

Fort William, the multi-award winning stage of the mountain biking world cup welcomed 250 riders from 25 nations to tackle this year's course, bringing 22,000 spectators to the area. The Highland Council's contractor Rapier supplied free wifi for the Mountain Bike World Cup in Fort William in June as Fort William's free wifi "High-Fi" went live.



Paving the way

Anyone tackling the popular West Highland Way will find the going underfoot a bit easier thanks to the council funding improvement works to a section along the old military road south of Kinlochleven.



Before

What was a long, rough and tiring part of the Way that was eroding, is now clear and smoother with better drainage. This is the first phase of improvements from the north side of the infamous Devil's Staircase to where the old Military Road meets the hydro track to the Blackwater Reservoir.

The West Highland Way is Scotland's most popular long distance path with over 35,000 people walking the whole length last year. It is 96 miles (154 km) long and starts at Milngavie, outside Glasgow, passes through Loch Lomond & Trossachs

National Park, over Rannoch Moor, into Glen Coe and ends up in Fort William.

The route brings in an estimated £16Million each year to businesses along its route.

The Council and Scottish Natural Heritage have part-funded the project which cost £40,000 and a second phase is due to start in the autumn.



After

Experienced mountain path builders Highland Conservation Limited carried out the work using locally sourced stone material from under the vegetation, which was then carefully placed back. The construction was both sensitive to the local environment and prevented the need of bringing in quarried material by helicopter at greater financial and environmental cost

This improved section should be a welcome relief to walkers on what is usually their forth or fifth day of the Way.

The Highland Council teamed up with Keep Scotland Beautiful and NC500 this year in a litter campaign



12 Highland beaches scoop in Scottish beach awards



Achmelvich Beach in Sutherland

Environmental charity, Keep Scotland Beautiful, has awarded 12 beaches in the Highlands top Beach Awards. Focusing on local environmental quality, the awards are designed to complement the work undertaken by the Scottish Environment Protection Agency on bathing water quality.

The Highland Council has been “flying the flag” for 25 consecutive years and this year came second across the whole of Scotland for its number of award winning beaches.

The Award Winning Highland beaches are:

- | | |
|--------------------|---------------|
| Achmelvich Bay | Loch Morlich |
| Brora Beach | Melvich |
| Dornoch Beach | Nairn Central |
| Durness, Sango Bay | Portmahomack |
| Embo Beach | Shandwick Bay |
| Golspie | Strathy Bay |



Loch Morlich Beach near Aviemore

The truth about toilets

“Spending a penny” has never been so topical in the Highlands.

Looking after the pennies is what the Council really needs to do to continue provide essential services and provide value for money in these times of shrinking budgets.

With a need to make budget savings for this year, members agreed that nearly £0.7m could be saved through rationalising some of its public toilet provision and increasing charges for their use.

Looking at the map of the Highland toilets you could be forgiven for thinking there is actually an excellent provision across the region, especially if you have just driven up the A9 looking for somewhere to spend your penny! Indeed The Highland Council has the highest number of public toilets in the UK. There is no statutory obligation for Councils to have public toilets and many councils don't have any.

There are 96 Council managed public toilets in the Highlands, some of which are open on a seasonal basis, and 28 comfort schemes in addition to public toilets at High Life Highland's facilities (libraries and swimming pools etc).

The Comfort Scheme allows the public to use toilets in pubs, hotels and community services without being paying customers. The scheme provides clean and safe public toilets in convenient places for residents and visitors. Local providers that join the scheme are paid an annual fee by the Council to open up their toilets for public use.

The Council is looking at alternative options for 29 of the 96 council managed public toilets. This could be finding a local business willing to provide a service through the comfort scheme or transferring a facility to a local community group. They could be closed if rarely used or there are other facilities nearby.

There are areas which could really benefit from a new comfort scheme and this will all be taken into account in the review.

A review of the rationalisation programme will be completed by 31st October 2018 and we will consult with communities before any decisions are made and no toilets will be closed in the meantime.

The Facts:

- The Highland Council maintains most public toilets in the UK, followed by Gwynedd (73); and Pembrokeshire (73).
- Highland has 96 council managed public toilets.
- 29 of these are under review.
- There are 28 Comfort schemes across Highland (Of the Comfort Schemes, 7 are provided by the Private Sector, 21 are provided by Community Groups).
- 6 toilets are High Life Highland run (Invergordon, Torridon campsite, Glen Nevis visitor centre, Pefferside Park, Bellfield Park & Thurso swimming pool).
- There is no statutory obligation for councils to have public toilets.
- 37 Local Authorities in the UK no longer run any public conveniences.



Dunvegan toilets



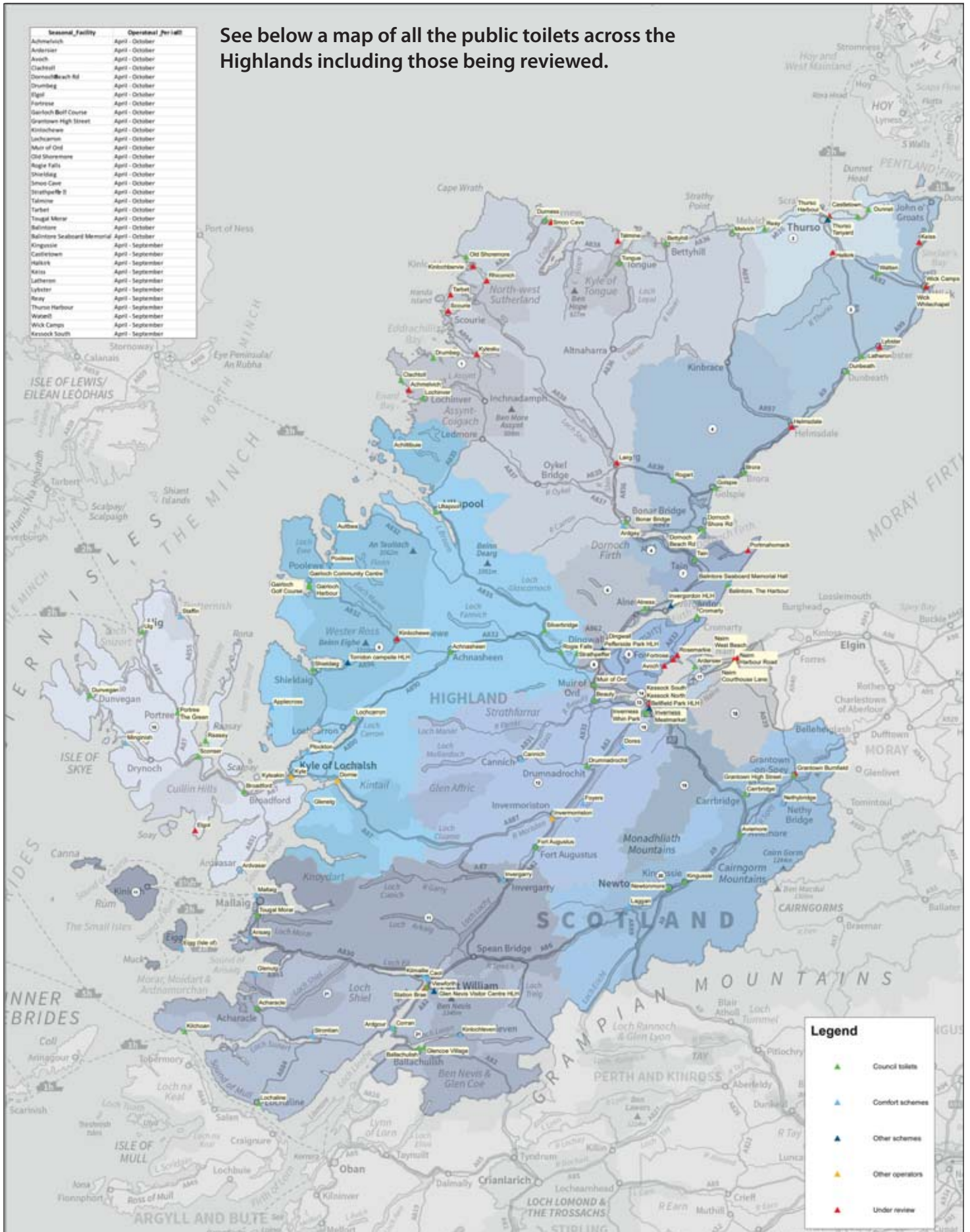
Kylesku toilets under review



Latheron toilets

See below a map of all the public toilets across the Highlands including those being reviewed.

Seasonal Facility	Operational Per/Year
Achnafleck	April - October
Anderson	April - October
Asoch	April - October
Clachnacree	April - October
Dunrobin Beach Rd	April - October
Drumbeg	April - October
Eilat	April - October
Forres	April - October
Garbhach Bull Court	April - October
Grampian High Street	April - October
Kilchrean	April - October
Lachuan	April - October
Muir of Oid	April - October
Old Shoremore	April - October
Ruge Falls	April - October
Shingaling	April - October
Smoo Cave	April - October
Strathgulle II	April - October
Talmone	April - October
Tarbet	April - October
Tungat Moor	April - October
Salmore	April - October
Salmore Seaside Memorial	April - October
Kingslie	April - September
Casterlown	April - September
Halkirk	April - September
Kilns	April - September
Lathem	April - September
Lybster	April - September
Reay	April - September
Thurso Harbour	April - September
Wateris	April - September
Wick Camps	April - September
Kerrock South	April - September



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All Public Conveniences Operational Aug 2018

Coordinate System: British National Grid
 Projection: Transverse Mercator
 Datum: OSGB 1936
 False Easting: 400,000.0000
 False Northing: 100,000.0000
 Central Meridian: -2.0000
 Scale Factor: 0.9996
 Latitude Of Origin: 49.0000
 Units: Meter



New affordable homes underway

The Highland Council remains on track to deliver much-needed affordable homes across the Highlands as recent figures produced show all new home completions in Highland are on the up.

The Scottish Government announced in 2016 that they were going to invest £3billion to deliver 50,000 new affordable units over a five year period. The Highland Council area's share of this investment for 2018/19 is £40.1million.

In its Strategic Housing Plan 2018-2023 the Council has a pledge to approve a minimum of 500 units each year, of which 70% will be for affordable rent and 30% for low cost home ownership, and aims to deliver 2,500 new affordable homes across the Highlands between 2016 and 2021.

In order to meet these challenging targets council officers work closely with a range of partners to drive forward delivery, in particular the Highland Housing Development HUB which includes housing association partners and the Scottish Government who meet regularly to monitor the investment programme and agree site priorities.

Figures produced by the Council's Planning Service show that the number of all new homes built in the



View of new homes at Upper Achintore in Fort William.

last decade in Highland are on the rise. Between 2007 and 2017 a total of 10403 new homes were completed. Last calendar year 881 new homes were completed, a 13.5% rise compared to 2016. These figures are produced through analysis of accepted Completion Certificates and Temporary Occupation Certificates.

There has been significant increases in annual completions when compared with recent years, in Fort William, Eilean a' Cheò and the Black Isle.

750th new home milestone

The completion of the 750th new council home built in Highland since the re-introduction of the Council House Build Programme in 2010 was marked by a visit from Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart on 20th August.

The Kirk Brae development in Inverness is made up of 27 new 2 and 1 bedroom flats, built on a gap site above the Smitton and Culloden Free Church. The development, commissioned by The Highland Council's Development and Infrastructure Service, was designed by Bracewell Stirling (Architects) and local company Compass Building and Construction carried out the construction works. 21 of the properties are for rent, helping the council reach the



750 milestone and 6 are for the low-cost initiative for first time buyers.

The Highland Council is committed to providing high quality, energy efficient affordable homes so people can live and work in their communities and all ages, from the younger generations to older residents with specific housing needs.

Supporting parenting skills in prison

Written by Freya Povlsen (Youth Trainee)

A new learning and bonding programme recently delivered by The Highland Council in Inverness Prison has led to two fathers gaining their SCQF level 4 qualifications.

'Peep Progression Pathway' (Parenting Early Education Programme) within the prison, is the first to be delivered in the whole of the UK to help strengthen adult-child relationships with families who have a member in prison.

The Peep Learning Together programme has reached 400 families in the last year across the Highlands in order to help parents gain confidence in their abilities and be the best parent they can. Through this, parents/carers have the chance to progress and gain an SCQF qualification at level 3, 4 or 5 in a variety of Early Child Development topics, as well as being able to learn about the importance of positive play and the impact this has on their child's education and growth.

"It has been a great achievement to be able to deliver the first pathway not only in the Highlands, but the first pathway group within a prison in the UK."

says Gillian Forbes, the councils Peep co-ordinator.

"Our main focus is to support and empower parents and extend everyday learning opportunities. It's been lovely to watch the fathers we've been working with grow in confidence over the last 12 weeks and a real privilege to support them in achieving their recent qualifications."

The dads now plan to continue their qualifications at SCQF level 5 in Early Child Development.

Photo (L to R): Gillian Forbes (Peep co-ordinator for Highland Council), Mairanne Nairn (family support project co-ordinator), with parents Scott Grant and Conor Bennet.



Grow with us

Written by Freya Povlsen (Youth Trainee)

Learn more about career opportunities with the Council if you have a flexible outlook.

Stephen Carr started at The Highland Council in August 2012 in a twelve week intern position. He was living in Edinburgh and had just graduated with a PhD in Environmental Chemistry from the University of Edinburgh when he saw a position as an Environmental Researcher come up with the Council on 'myjobscotland'. Despite having never considered working for a council, in the public sector, or living so far north, he decided to make application and see what happened. Six years on and Stephen is still working at The Highland Council. He is currently the Corporate Performance Manager happily living in the Highlands and loving what he does.

Stephen really enjoys investigating an issue, figuring out why something is happening, and considering what can be done to make it better. His internship allowed him to discover that working with the Council really aligned with his values. Through his career with the Council he has been able to work in positions that he genuinely cares about and therefore enjoys. He said:

"the key thing is finding work you enjoy or care about. There are a lot of really hard jobs in the Council, but if you care about what you are doing you will always get fulfilment, and as a result working hard will feel easy or natural."

While he was doing his internship, another position came up as maternity cover for the Policy Officer (Climate Change) in his team. He decided to apply and was fortunate enough to get the fifteen month role. He felt it was a really exciting time to be involved in climate change at the Council as it was one of their main priorities. During this time he was working with many people across the Council, including the political leadership, so that he could understand what their aspirations were. A year later, the climate change team was expanded and he was able to get a two year contract as the Principal Policy Officer.

In 2016, when the climate team was reduced, his post was removed. He made what he calls a 'sideways move' into the Council's Policy team on 12 month contract and his career took a different direction. He enjoyed the large variety of interesting

things that this team covered such as poverty, community engagement, and local democracy.

A year later, Stephen's contract came to an end with no possibility of an extension. Nevertheless another placement became available and Stephen became a Waste Strategy Officer in Dingwall.

Stephen applied for his current role, as Corporate Performance Manager, in 2017 - his first permanent contract. Through this role, he gathers a wide range of data and information about the Council's performance and presenting this so that councillors and the public can understand how the Council is performing and be assured that they are getting good value for money.

Stephen would encourage others to consider careers with the Council He feels that the opportunities for change and variety make it a really exciting place to work. He added:

"The Council is actively trying to do good for the people of the Highlands and make people's lives better. So if that is something that resonates with you I would encourage you to consider a career at the Council."

He revealed that he has had to sometimes push himself up some steep learning curves in his career to get up to speed, but being willing to step forward



Stephen Carr by Freya Povlsen

and assist with exciting strategic projects has given Stephen a huge amount of experience and he has been able to meet and work with many different people.

Overall, Stephen has had a very eventful and exciting career at The Highland Council and still has a lot more good things to come. From starting as an intern to becoming the Corporate Performance Manager, Stephen feels that:

“the Council has been really good to me. I have been able to work in a number of really interesting roles; it has a set of values that I really believe in, and I just love the Highlands as a place to live.”

Culture Days mark Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh as 'cultural hub'



Làithean Cultar (Culture Days)

Làithean Cultar (Culture Days) were organised in June by The Highland Council Gaelic Team and Bun-Sgoil Ghàidhlig Phort Rìgh. Established actors, authors, dancers, story tellers, artists, sports leaders, singers and musicians in the national Gaelic and cultural sector led the Làithean Cultar sessions.

Head Teacher Mrs Flora Guidi, said:

“The Làithean Cultar were a huge success on many levels, especially as the whole school including the Sgoil Araich participated and every child had the opportunity to take part in the sessions, which included, dance, creative writing, sports, drama, story- telling, art, and Gaelic Rap music.”

All the sessions were held through the medium of Gaelic and the Làithean Cultar were educational, informative and fun. Làithean Cultar, received financial support from Bòrd na Gàidhlig and was also supported by The Highland Council.

HIGHLAND AR

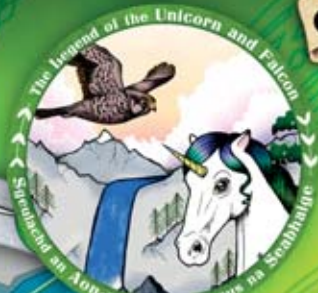
Discover the

Legends

of Inverness

Guide

Download the app



Find the Legends in Inverness



Point device at picture target

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Augmented reality breathes life into local legends

A series of plaques depicting local legends and historic events have been installed at various locations across Inverness.

The artwork on the plaques acts as a trigger for a new exciting app which uses augmented reality to bring a story to life in 3D in your surroundings.

The augmented reality trail includes plaques at the Victorian Market, the Steeple, the Castle, Ness Walk, Huntly Street and Eden Court.

The app "HighlandAR Legends" is part of a Council project under the City-Region Deal. Communications and Resilience Manager Ruth Cleland who is leading the project said:

"HighlandAR Legends is a global, mobile app which you can download from Playstores. The app uses augmented reality to bring the legends and history of Inverness to life. You can follow

the trail on a map to find the legends. Simply point your device at the target picture to bring the market dog to life or see Nessie swimming in the river. You can look over the shoulder of the Brahan Seer up at the castle and peer into a prisoners' cell on the side of the steeple or watch a unicorn and fairies play in a magic garden at Falcon Square and even see a life-size unicorn at Eden Court."

The artworks and the app will provide a rich new experience for visitors to Inverness and also brings wider economic benefits and income generation opportunities to the Council.

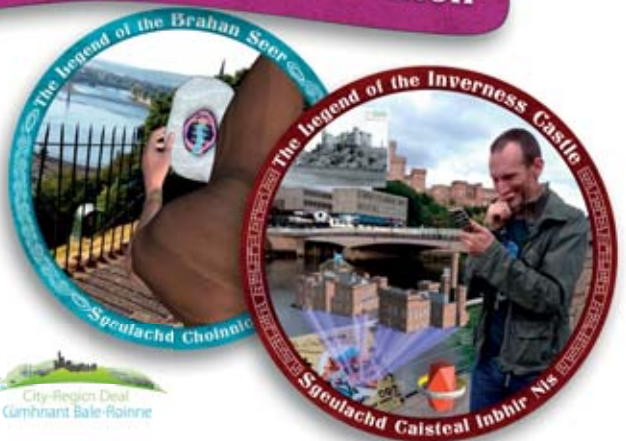
Provost of Inverness, Helen Carmichael said:

"I am delighted to see these stunning artworks installed around Inverness. It is a wonderful and exciting

new way of telling the stories and legends of our city which is rich in culture and history. The app brings these artworks to life in such an amazing way and I am sure people will love it!"

The Inverness Common Good Fund provided funding for the artworks which were designed by local artists and the Council's Graphic Designer Kirsty Foster. Darroch McNaught of DeuXality created the HighlandAR app and augmented reality experiences.

The app HighlandAR Legends can be downloaded from Google Play and the Apple App Store. You can find out more about the new app and where the artworks are located and the history behind them at the website above.



Produced by The Highland Council | Designed by KJ Foster | App and AR by DeuXality

Legends artworks by Claire Maclean, Hannah Stradling and Catriona Meighan. HighlandAR Trademark UK00003226885



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Developing a sustainable waste solution for Highland

The Longman Landfill site in Inverness has now been approved as the preferred location to construct a new centralised waste management facility (Materials Recovery Facility), as an alternative to sending our waste to landfill, to recover recyclates and produce Refuse Derived Fuel. This is the Council's preferred interim arrangement for meeting the requirements of the ban on landfilling which commences in January 2021. This facility will process all of the Highland's 83,000 tonnes of residual (non-recyclable) waste from 2021 onwards.

The Materials Recovery Facility will be designed to process mixed residual waste and recover value from the material by removing items such as metals and plastics, but in the main, producing a refuse derived fuel in readiness for sending to Energy from Waste facilities elsewhere.

A team of officers across the council have been preparing an external design of the facility and a planning application, for submission later in the autumn.

The Council will also carry out further work to look at the feasibility of constructing an Energy-from-Waste (EfW) facility co-located on the site in the future as a long term option if resources can be identified.

The Council handles some 140,000 tonnes of waste per annum, and around 57,000 tonnes of this material is currently re-used, recycled or recovered from kerbside collections from households and businesses, as well as from Recycling Centres and Points. However, around 83,000 tonnes of biodegradable municipal waste is sent to landfill at a cost of approximately £11 million a year.

Councillor Allan Henderson who chairs the Council's Environment,

Development and Infrastructure Committee says:

"I strongly believe that waste produced in the Highlands should be dealt with in the Highlands and the Longman site provides the best strategic location with excellent transport links.

"Long gone are the days when it was ok to just bury our waste out of sight and allow future generations to deal with the consequences. The national legislation changes coming in mean that councils will not be allowed to landfill our biodegradable municipal waste. The aims of this ban are to treat waste as a commodity or resource, maximise reuse and recycling, and stimulate a circular economy. The ban

will also reduce the amount of methane being produced by landfill sites. Failure to address the ban on landfilling waste is a significant risk for the Council. Urgent action is now required, and doing nothing is not an option."

Councillor Jimmy Gray, the Administration's Environmental Spokesperson, added:

"Highland needs an overall waste strategy that is sustainable, affordable, friendly to the environment and efficient (SAFE). Our waste strategy needs to go beyond finding a clean and efficient way of dealing with our waste. We also need to **promote a massive culture change** – to change people's behaviour and attitudes to waste and litter. We need the support of everyone, as individuals, families, schools, businesses and communities, to ensure that we in the Highlands set an example for the rest of Scotland to follow."

Ban on Landfill

Big changes to the way that all Councils in Scotland manage their waste were introduced by the Scottish Government in 2012, with a ban of biodegradable municipal waste from landfill from January 2021.



What is a Materials Recovery Facility (MRF)?

These can fall into two main categories, those that are designed to process large volumes of mixed recyclables (e.g from the blue bins) into their individual material streams and prepare them for sale in the commodity markets; or , as in this case, others that deal with mixed residual waste and look to recover value from the material by removing amounts of recyclable streams such as metals and plastics, but in the main, producing a refuse derived fuel in readiness for sending to Energy from Waste facilities elsewhere.

What is Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF)?

Fuel that is produced from waste that cannot currently be recycled. Refuse derived fuel is used in thermal treatment facilities such as Energy from Waste plants and can generate electricity and hot water for communal heating systems in the local area.

What is Energy from Waste?

Energy from waste is the process of creating energy, in the form of electricity and/ or heat, from treating waste at high temperature. Energy from waste facilities can be designed to provide power (electricity) and/or heat. Benefits of this approach include providing employment opportunities, reducing vehicle movements by eliminating haulage of waste to central Scotland, and providing a focus for future 'green' industrial development (through provision of low cost, low carbon process heat). Modern Energy from Waste technology is well regulated and minimises harm to the environment.

Phasing out single use plastics

Within the UK, there is now widespread understanding and acceptance that single use plastics have a detrimental impact on our wider environment.

The majority of plastic currently produced can be recycled. However, the extent to which plastics are recycled depends upon various technical, economic and logistical factors. Single Use Plastics make up a significant proportion of waste ending up in landfill or in the natural environment and can take hundreds of years or more to degrade. The Highland Council recognises that discarded plastics, including non-recyclable cups, bottles and straws, are a major environmental pollutant and of detrimental impact to the Highland region and its communities. Highland, as the local authority with the longest coastline in Scotland (at 4,905 kilometres), has a key role to play in reducing plastic waste.

The Council is committed to phasing out the use of single use plastics and we are supportive of initiatives led by local communities, such as:

- Pupils from Ullapool Primary campaigned successfully for all 14 cafes, bars and restaurants in Ullapool to be officially free of plastic straws from December 2017. The local supermarket plans to follow suit during 2018.
- A pilot in Lochaber High School is testing the use of biodegradable Vegware products for take away meal options to replace polystyrene alternatives.
- An initiative, led by a sixth year pupil at Glen Urquhart High School, has removed the use of plastic bottles on site. The pupil secured a grant to buy all 200 pupils reusable drinks bottles. The grant was provided by Aird and Loch Ness Ward discretionary funding, chosen through our participatory budgeting approach there titled 'Your Cash, Your Choice'.
- A team of volunteer Eco Officers to help support and implement low carbon behaviour change initiatives throughout the council estate.



reduce | re-use | recycle

Reducing our waste - How can you help?

Over 59,000 tonnes of material was collected and recycled by The Highland Council during 2017 which equates to a household recycling rate of 44.6%.

This is a really positive step towards meeting the targets set out in Scotland's Zero Waste Plan to reduce the amount of waste we send to landfill each year. Reduction of waste and reuse (by ourselves or others) as alternatives to landfilling, often have the most positive impact economically, socially and environmentally. However, improving both the quantity and the quality of our recycling is also of critical importance.

"Contamination" is the term used for incorrect items presented for collection in recycling bins. Once our recycling is collected it is transported to a Material Recovery Facility (MRF) to be sorted prior to reprocessing. Heavily contaminated loads of recycling may be rejected by reprocessors and sent

to landfill. Consequently, contaminated recycling bins cannot be emptied by our collection crews. Less contamination in recycling bins ensures that we can offer better quality material, which can be reprocessed more efficiently and reduces disposal and transportation costs.

Items which still have some food waste on them or are not dry when placed in the bin are considered as contamination. Placing the wrong items in recycling bins can also present problems at the MRF. Common problematic contaminants include: plastic bags and wrappers, glass and black plastic. Plastic bags, for example, may get caught in mechanisms and damage machinery.

To ensure that the material in your recycling bin is of good quality and not contaminated, please make sure that items are clean, dry and loose. For more information about what to put in your recycling bin visit: www.highland.gov.uk/recycle or contact our Waste Aware Team (recycle@highland.gov.uk).



The image shows a blue recycling bin being held under a green faucet with water spraying into it. A hand is visible holding the bin. The background is green with white text and a logo.

recycle for Highland
aith-chuairtich airson na Gàidhealtachd

Cleaner recycling means less waste, less landfill and more value.

- ✓ Empty
- ✓ Rinse
- ✓ Dry
- ✓ Recycle (No bags)

Success for Council projects at national awards



Pictured with the Awards are L to R:
Karen Maclean – Project Co-ordinator and
Beatriz Fraga de Cal – Energy Engineer

The Highland Council has been awarded two commendations and a first place at the 2018 Scottish Regional Energy Efficiency Awards for the Highland Home Energy Efficiency Programme.

These awards recognise the efforts made to eliminate fuel poverty and improve the energy efficiency of homes in the UK. The awards, presented in Glasgow in June, recognise the Council's work to improve energy use in homes across the Highlands and to help to tackle the high levels of fuel poverty, particularly in rural areas.

The Council has received recognition in the following categories;

- Large Scale Project of the year – Winner
- Local Authority of the year – Commended
- Working with vulnerable customers – Commended

This is the third year that the Highland scheme has been recognised for structural improvements

across the Highland area. The Council have delivered a range of insulation improvements in partnership with E-On and the current programme will continue through to 2019.

The Highland Home Energy Efficiency Programme is a Scottish Government programme that is led by Councils to target homes that are vulnerable to fuel poverty. It provides improvements to the fabric by provision of insulation leading to a healthier and more efficient home. The Highland programme has run for 5 years and delivered savings to householders helping to reduce fuel poverty.

Shortlist for Energy Institute Awards 2018

The Highland Council have been shortlisted for 2 high profile Energy Institute Awards, and are representing The Highland Council amongst quite prominent nominees. The EI Awards 2018 award categories are for Public Engagement (The Highland Climate Challenge) and Energy Champion (Eddie Boyd).

New role for listed building

A Council project has breathed new life into the listed building which had lain empty for twenty five years, transforming it into new offices to serve the whole of Lochaber. The new Council offices at Charles Kennedy Building, transforms a former secondary school opposite West End car park on Achintore Road. The move consolidates staff from 3 town centre sites.

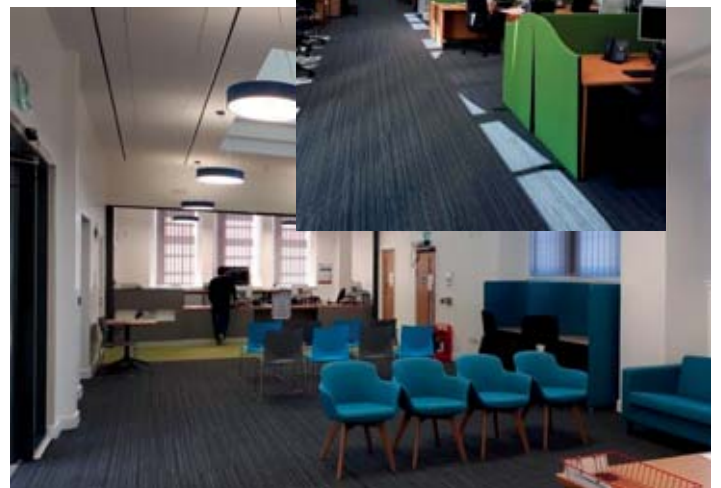
The offices include an extension that accommodates the Department of Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus on the ground floor. The adjacent former Fort William Primary School has also been redeveloped and provides accommodation for Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Changeworks and The Highland Council's Archive and Records Store.

Staff worked hard to ensure any disruption during the move was kept to a minimum. Lochaber House closed its doors for the last time at the end of the day on Tuesday 22nd May.



As well as re-using furniture and fittings throughout the new building, the Council gave away substantial amounts of surplus furniture, filing cabinets and office supplies to over 93 sites operated by the voluntary sector, partner services, schools and other council offices. A public auction sale of all the remaining furniture and general items from Lochaber House also took place to ensure that the move had taken every step possible to minimise landfill and encourage the reuse/recycle ethos.

The new office will allow the Council to deliver services more cost-effectively and efficiently with the net annual revenue saving to the Council expected to be around £100,000 after meeting the capital financing costs.



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Apprentice has her eye on the top job

One of The Highland Council's apprentices has her eye on the top job.

Bryony McDiarmid (18) from Cawdor, started her two year apprenticeship in Business and Administration in ePlanning in November 2017 after a short spell in the retail sector.

Commenting in our Spring "Highpoints" article on Apprentices, to a question about her future ambitions, Bryony said:

"I am going for the Chief Executive's job – you may as well aim for the highest."

Well - word travels fast and Bryony was given the opportunity to work alongside Steve Barron for a day in May to see for herself what the role involves.

Bryony said:

"What a great opportunity it was to get to work alongside Mr Steve Barron CEO for the day! He was kind and inclusive in his meetings, which there were many of during the day. I did get a very good insight into what goes on in the average day for Mr Barron. It was tough, following topics and giving my input, where I was not 'educated' on the discussion. I feel with the correct training and knowledge further into The Highland Council, I would feel more confident.

For now, I'll stay put, however Mr Barron knows where to find me if he ever needs a day off or decides to pass the job on!"

Chief Executive Steve Barron, soon to be retiring in November, said:

"It is very inspiring to see the level of ambition and promise our young apprentices have and Bryony has lots of potential to achieve her goals in life. It is good to aim high. Our apprentices are our future and I wish them all the very best."

Bryony added her thanks for the opportunity. She said:

"I like to think I got on well and hopefully Mr Barron isn't too worried for his job haha!"

The Highland Council's Modern Apprenticeship Programme currently provides employment and training for over 80 apprentices. Offering opportunities for new and existing employees in a wide range of occupations, the programme includes Graduate Apprenticeships as well as Modern Apprenticeships over 2 to 4 years, utilising the very best training provision locally and across Scotland. Working in partnership with Service managers throughout the Council opportunities are being developed all the time across the Highlands and in a wide range of occupations to support service delivery.

Apprentices are employed in Business Administration, Civil Engineering, Early Years Child Care, Painting and Decorating, Carpentry and Joinery, Plumbing, Electricals, Mechanics, Roads, Horticulture and Information Technology. These apprenticeships are provided in Dingwall, Inverness, Fort William, Golspie, Alness, Wick, Thurso, Dornoch and Portree. All apprentices in The Highland Council are paid a minimum of Scottish Living Wage.



Bryony with Steve Barron

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High-Fi for Highland towns - Free WiFi is rolled out to towns across the Highlands

Many towns across the Highlands now have access to free WiFi thanks to a project led by the Highland Council and funded by the Inverness and Highland City-Region Deal.

The free WiFi, called "High-Fi", is aimed at stimulating economic growth and will increase digital inclusion across the Highlands. Easy access to digital connectivity is seen as essential if the Highland region is to be innovative and keep its competitive place in the tourism market.



Allied to this, WiFi also offers the opportunity to gather data to support tourism and the creation of a wireless infrastructure in a town centre allows smart traffic management technology to be utilised.

The first phase of the free WiFi project was a Pilot in part of Inverness City Centre which was later rolled out to the wider city in early 2017 as Phase 2. The 3rd Phase is seeing the roll-out of free WiFi to 14 towns across Highland.

The free wifi covers:

- Aviemore,**
- Alness,**
- Dingwall,**
- Dornoch,**
- Drumnadrochit,**
- Fort Augustus,**
- Fort William,**
- Invergordon,**
- Nairn,**
- Portree; and**
- Tain;**

with Thurso, Ullapool and Wick due to go live any day now.

The City-Region Deal sets out the areas where the Scottish Government will commit investment of up to £135m and the UK Government will commit investment of up to £53.1m, which, together with £127m of further investment by the Council and partners, will deliver a step change in digital connectivity, digital healthcare, skills, innovation and infrastructure.

www.highland.gov.uk/site/high-fi/index.html



Leader of The Highland Council Margaret Davidson launching High-fi at Drumnadrochit and Fort Augustus



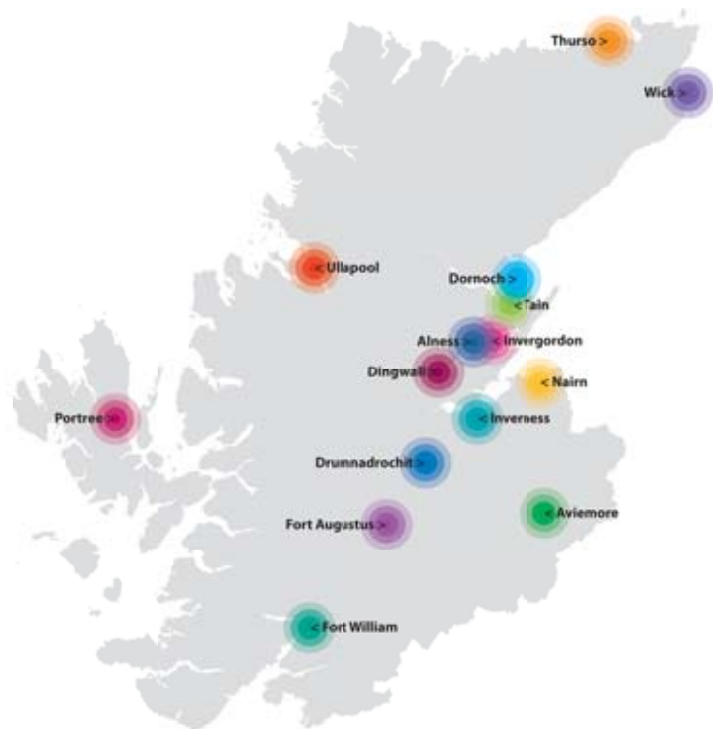
Aviemore



Fort William



Portree



Inside Housing Development Awards 2018

The shortlists for the Inside Housing Development Awards 2018 have just been published.

I'm pleased to confirm that The Raining's Stairs project has been selected for the shortlist in three categories:

Best Residential Development
(under 70 homes)

Best Affordable Housing Development
(under 25 homes)

Best Development Team



Blas Festival

Blas Festival will showcase young musicians and their choice of bands for Year of Young People 2018



year of young people
bliadhna na h-òigridh
2018

Hundreds of young people will be performing traditional music and song as the finale to this year's Blas Festival in a special event to mark Scotland's Year of Young People 2018.

The festival is providing a platform to showcase the amazing talents of young people and provide them with various opportunities to express themselves through culture.

This will culminate in a largescale showcase of young talent - Òran Mòr on Saturday 15th September when over 500 young musicians and singers are expected to perform alongside Skipinnish and Trail West, among others. This year young people's involvement will be even more widespread as they will take on key roles in creating, organising and running events which will offer them a range of new experiences.



2018 Highland Council Quality Awards

Our annual Quality Awards celebrate excellence and recognises the contribution teams of staff and individual employees make. The event is funded by sponsorship and entries are assessed by an independent judging panel who select the winning projects. Many of the winning teams go on to represent the Highlands at the national COSLA Awards.

One of the Awards is a community nominated award. Community councils, voluntary groups and local organisations are encouraged to nominate an individual or a team from any service within The Highland Council that they feel has provided the community with a high quality service and who deserves special recognition for their work.

To make a nomination please email: performance@highland.gov.uk or contact your local Ward Manager.

Celtic Media Festival 'coup' for Badenoch & Strathspey

The prestigious international Celtic Media Festival will spend its 40th year in the Highlands after a successful bid for it to take place in Aviemore in June 2019.

The Festival is an annual three day event that is a celebration of broadcasting, film talent and excellence from Scotland, Ireland, Isle of Man, Wales, Cornwall and Brittany, promoting the languages and cultures of these Celtic Nations and Regions.

It is supported by broadcast, film, cultural and economic development organisations throughout the Celtic countries.



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Adopt an HER Record



Is there a Highland site or object that is special to you?

The Highland Historic Environment Record (HER) is the Council's online database of all known heritage in the Highlands. We're looking for help to keep it updated and for photographs of many of the sites and finds included. Can you help?



As part of the Highland Archaeology Festival this year we're inviting you to adopt an HER record. This may be as simple as just sending us a good photograph. Or you could include descriptions of its present state, forward other out of copyright material which should be included or links to them, add a bibliography or send corrections if needed. Your work will be acknowledged in the on-line record.

Not familiar with using the HER? Come to one of our workshops over the summer. See the list on the HAF website.



• Highland Archaeology Festival •
Fèis Arc-eòlais na Gàidhealtachd



The Highland
Council
Comhairle na
Gàidhealtachd

Entries should be submitted to her@highland.gov.uk. They will be loaded into the HER before the HAF festival (29 September - 19 October), and linked via the HAF website www.highlandarchaeologyfestival.org. Some will be featured at the HAF conference on 13th and 14th October in Inverness.

For further information visit www.highlandarchaeologyfestival.org

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