

Highpoints

Sàr Phuingean

Celebrating staff achievements

Pg4



Secret Santa swap
for Foodbank Pg25



Accolades
for Caol Campus and
Kingussie Courthouse Pg14

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

Welcome

This issue focuses on the many staff and teams whose outstanding work was highlighted in this year's Quality Awards.

There is a lot of excellent work taking place, which is not only achieving significant financial savings to the Council, but is leading the way nationally and reinforcing our reputation across Scotland as a forward-thinking and very pro-active local authority.

Congratulations to all the winners and the nominees - Your energy, professionalism, skills and the great enthusiasm for the work you do is greatly appreciated by us all!

I would like to take this opportunity to thank outgoing Chief Executive Steve Barron and wish him well for a long and happy retirement - and to welcome our new Chief Executive Donna Manson. Donna has wasted no time in getting out and about to meet communities and learn about the Highlands. This is no mean feat, given our vast geography and I am sure her visits will be much appreciated by everyone.

May you all have a healthy and happy festive season!



Bill Lobban Highland Council Convener



Photo by Andrew Dowsett Photography

New Chief Exec Donna Manson

Donna Manson took over the helm as Chief Executive at The Highland Council in October.

Donna started her career teaching in areas of deprivation and has a real passion for reducing inequalities for families. She worked in Education in Edinburgh and Fife before her last post as Service Director for Children and Young People in the Scottish Borders. She has been a regular visitor to all areas in the Highlands for over 30 years with a keen interest in sailing and hill walking, and visiting family in Thurso and Inverness.

Donna launched a programme of public and staff engagement in November. She said:

"I am ambitious that the Council is a strong and visible presence in local areas and viewed to be playing a positive and productive role, working with local businesses, partners and the public for the benefit of both local people and visitors to the Highlands. I have really enjoyed being out in communities with the budget team, meeting staff, listening to people within their local area and hearing what matters are important to them.

"As members of the community and service users themselves, staff views and ideas are particularly important. My aim is that the public will be respectful of the valuable role every member of staff carries out in our Council, and be able to recognise the skills and talent that is in our workforce.

"Some clear themes are emerging and during December we will be analysing what people are telling us and we will report on this in the new year."

Hundreds of people have now watched our budget video, have completed the online survey and have attempted the Budget Challenge, to see how they would make choices to balance the budget.

www.highland.gov.uk/yourvoice



2018 Quality Awards



in partnership with

Tusker.

e-on



Quality Awards musicians

Entertaining guests during the Highland Council's Quality Awards held on 8th November 2018, was Piper Louis Peteranna from Culloden Academy and the Charleston String Band featuring Rachel Gillies, Emily Blackmore, Isobel Garvie, Abigail Morris, Ethan Hodgson, Ramsay Banks and Kern Robertson, supported by Ross Fairfield on piano & music instructor David Hay on violin.



'Plot to plate' School cook is Council's Employee of the Year

A Cook at Broadford Primary School on the Isle of Skye has scooped the Highland Council's Employee of the Year 2018 Award for her commitment to promote healthy eating and for inspiring pupils to get involved from "plot to plate".

Annette Burfoot, who has been at the school for 11 years, is described as a skilled and dedicated member of staff who is passionate about promoting healthy eating and regularly goes into classrooms to chat to the children about nutrition and developing healthy eating habits. She also encourages them to get involved in the planning of menus for school meals making the most of fresh herbs and vegetables grown in the school garden.



With the encouragement of the Council's catering service, earlier this year Annette entered the annual Scottish national competition, Scottish School cook of the Year. She won the Highland heat and then went on to compete with cooks from throughout Scotland and came away with the runner up award.

Before competing, Annette consulted and trialled menu options with primary 6 and 7 pupils who helped her select the mouth-watering menu she put forward. All the fresh vegetables, herbs and fruit used in her award



Photo L-R: Leader of the Council Cllr Margaret Davidson; Annette Burfoot; Manish Garg from WIPRO; and host Norman MacLeod.

Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

winning dish that impressed the judges were grown by the pupils. After attending the award ceremony she laid on a party with lots of tasty treats to personally thank pupils and staff for all their help and support.

Catering Services Manager Sue Nield who nominated Annette for Employee of the Year said:

"Annette's proactive role within her school is the very heart of what our school meals are all about. Her relationship with staff and children is inspirational. With her encouragement, pupils are eating and enjoying a wide variety of foods. One of the favourite vegetables on the menu is kale - it's the way she cooks it and crisps it up which the pupils love! She is always willing to do the best that she can in supporting her school and the whole community."

One parent added:

"I've seen first-hand the passion Annette she has for cooking healthy balanced meals and how much she cares about all the children getting a good meal."

She is a credit to her profession and to Broadford Primary."

Annette was presented with her award by the Leader of the Council, Cllr Margaret Davidson and Sponsor Manish Garg from WIPRO at a ceremony held on 8th November 2018 in Inverness Town House. The Awards, sponsored by Viridor, Tusker, E-On Energy, Hub North Scotland, Morrison Construction and WIPRO were hosted by STV news presenter Norman MacLeod.

Also short-listed for Employee of the Year for their outstanding contributions were Tenant Participation Officer Lorna Simpson and Additional Supports Needs Officer Roseann Christie.

Lorna has been a Tenant Participation Officer for the past ten years covering Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross. Throughout this time she has worked tirelessly to involve tenants in the Housing Service.

Roseann Christie is renowned throughout the Care and Learning Service as a passionate and committed supporter of children and families.

Community Award

Communities across the Highlands were invited to nominate Council staff who they felt deserved special recognition and the first Community Award of the evening went to Tom Grant, a leisure assistant at Lochbroom Leisure in Ullapool.

As well as coaching swimming to all ages, he also, as a volunteer, runs a popular swim club teaching children to be safe, happy and confident in the water.

Last year the Club won their first competition medal in a long time – giving the young competitors a real boost. Tom has also been looking beyond the pool and, thanks to his enthusiasm and skills, there is now a thriving network of wild swimmers in the Ullapool area.



In March the antics of Tom and his colleagues became a surprise internet hit when they “swam” through deep snow that had accumulated on the tennis courts. The stunt raised £2,800 to support the local swimming pool.

Lochbroom Community Council who nominated him said:

“Tom doesn’t just do a great job of encouraging and inspiring the people he comes into contact with through his work - his volunteering, his infectious enthusiasm and energy is a positive influence on the wider community as well. We want him to know how much we all appreciate him.”



Photo L-R: Provost Helen Carmichael; Tom Grant; and host Norman MacLeod.

2018
Quality Awards

Community Award

Lenny Choat, the Village Officer in Beauly was nominated by the local Community Council who praise him for his hard work and for undertaking his duties with pride, going out of his way to improve the general appearance of the village and working closely with the various groups that give Beauly its vibrancy.

Secretary David Taylor said:

“Lenny has a very positive and constructive approach to his work. He gives good advice and does an excellent job. Nothing is too much trouble. Beauly is lucky to have an individual who does the job so well and with enthusiasm and pride. He is a friend of our village and we all value his dedication and hard work.”

Community Award

The final Community Awards went to the Sutherland based Refuse Collection Team of Mark Robertson and Donald Mackay who were nominated by Strathy and Armadale Community Council for the excellent job they do.

The Community Council highlighted the little extras Mark and Donald do that make a difference. Of particular note is the work the team do in collecting waste from popular local viewpoints, laybys and from Strathy Cemetery car park. During the summer these bins are often overflowing and the team not only empty them but work hard to collect the loose rubbish. The Community Council said:

“We would like Mark and Donald to know that their efforts are appreciated within the whole community.”



Photo by Ewen Weatherpoon



Team of the Year

The 2018 Team of the Year award went to the Council's Mental Health Representative Team.

Two years ago the council-wide corporate team of Mental Health Representatives was set up to provide front line support to colleagues experiencing mental health problems. There are now 58 Mental Health Reps, from all Council Services geographically spread across the Highlands, who have volunteered to carry out this important role in addition to their normal duties.

The impact that the team has made has been immediate and significant. Since the official launch in January last year, they have supported over 100 colleagues to find appropriate mental health services. This early



“ ...reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues. ”

intervention has greatly improved people's chances of early recovery and reduced the likelihood of absence from work.

As well as supporting their colleagues and having such a

positive impact on the wellbeing of staff, this team of committed volunteers play a wider role in the community by raising awareness and reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues.

Trainee of the Year

The Highland Council's 2018 Trainee of the Year Award went to Drew MacBeath.

Drew joined the Council's Human Resources hub within the business support team in

December last year as a Modern Apprentice, studying for a SVQ3 in Business Administration.

Carol Campbell, Mentor to Modern Apprentices said:

“Drew has proved to be a fantastic addition to the team, even in the short time he has been employed by the Council. He shows real depth of character, initiative, motivation, and encourages those within his immediate work group. Drew is a very happy individual and his bubbly nature coupled with his great work ethic has had a massive very positive effect on everyone he works with.”



Team projects

Teams of Council staff were invited to enter projects into four categories and all short-listed entries were assessed by an independent judging panel. During the Award Ceremony, the four category winners were announced. The winning team projects for the following categories were:

Making the Highlands an Even Better Place to Live

The Council's Historic Environment Record Online (HERO) project to develop an interactive website that gives easy access to information, photographs, illustrations and reports for over 50,000 archaeological sites, historic buildings, battlefields, designed landscapes and other sites of cultural importance.



Photo by Ewen Weather Spoon



Supporting People to Learn and Thrive

A Literacy Ambassadors project between Dingwall Academy and Ben Wyvis Primary which sees senior pupils work with P6 and P7 pupils on a regular weekly basis to help develop key literacy skills, provide enhance learning and improve attainment.



Photo by Ewen Weather Spoon



Team projects

Making Highland a Welcoming Place where People Succeed in Life and Business

The Delivery Law website project. Internet delivery surcharging is one of the most common topics of complaints received by the Council's Trading Standards team. After much success tackling online sellers on a case-by-case basis, this project takes the work to the next level by using a concerted and collaborative national approach to achieve a wider range of objectives, through the creation of a "one-stop-shop" delivery law website: www.deliverylaw.uk



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Delivering Efficiency, Earning Income and Improving Services

The Highland Council and Department of Work and Pensions project to co-locate to Caithness House in Wick. This joint venture has brought Jobcentre Plus alongside the Council's Service Point, Welfare Support Service, and other service delivery teams, in modern offices, delivering more efficient use of space and other resources, strengthened partnership working and significantly improved accessibility to more 'holistic' services for local residents.



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Outstanding Partnership Award

The 2018 Outstanding Partnership Award went to Nairn Academy's Additional Support Needs Bronze Duke of Edinburgh Award project.

The school is the first mainstream school in Highland to deliver a Bronze Duke of Edinburgh to children with Additional Support Needs. Two groups of pupils have successfully taken part.

The skills they have learnt have helped improve their self-confidence and independence and has seen them volunteering and engaging with the wider local community.



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Convener's Award

The Convener's Award went to the Highland Housing Hub.

A unique collaboration between The Highland Council, the Scottish Government, the Highland Housing Associations, the Highland Housing Alliance and the Highland Small Communities Housing Trust – all working together to deliver high quality housing to people who can't afford to own their homes. By working together and sharing their resources and expertise the Hub has opened up previously constrained sites, doubling the amount of new affordable housing in the Highlands, increasing the quality of housing and building communities through delivery of a variety of housing tenures.



Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon

Retiring Council Chief Exec Steve Barron pays tribute to staff

At his last official function, The Highland Council's retiring Chief Executive Steve Barron paid tribute to two members of staff for their outstanding work.

He took the opportunity to present a special commendation award to the Council's Project Co-ordinator for War Memorials Alf Leslie at the Quality Awards. Steve said:

"The timing of our event is ideal to allow us to pay tribute to some brilliant work done in a 3 year project to restore 121 war memorials across the Highlands in a mark of respect for those who lost their lives serving their country in the Great War.

"Alf Leslie and Hugh Gardner have worked tirelessly to ensure that these powerful symbols of the past have been restored to their original condition. The work has been challenging both technically and in terms of funding. It has required patience, determination and sensitivity but the results are truly amazing.

Alf has given his heart to this work and is a worthy recipient of this special award. As Hugh says these memorials were built out of love and have stood for the last 100 years. This project will ensure they are standing for the next 100 years."

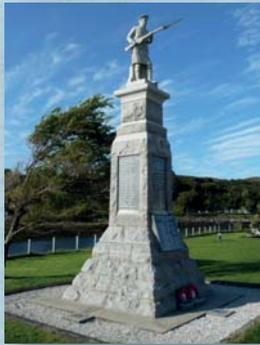


Photo: CEX Steve Barron pictured presenting Alf Leslie with his special commendation certificate.

Photo by Ewen Weatherspoon



He then went on to give a personal tribute to the Council's Head of Development and Regeneration Allan Maguire who, over a long career has improved the lives and circumstances of at least 20,000 families.

Since joining The Highland Council in 2001 Allan has developed the Estates section and the Housing Development team and taken the lead on forging strong partnerships including setting up Housing Development Forums, the Housing HUB and Apprentice Schemes.

He has also lead on the establishment of the Landbank Fund and secured grants to

establish Infrastructure Loan Fund. In Allan's tenure the Highlands have secured over £400m of Scottish Government grant delivering over 5,500 new affordable homes including over 1,000 new Council Houses.

Presenting a special Lifetime Achievement Award to Allan, Steve said:

"In a career starting in London, for the last 17 years Allan has worked in the Highlands and shown true professionalism, ingenuity, creativity and dedication.

The quality and volume of his work in delivering housing projects which have transformed the lives and opportunities of young families is quite incredible."



- Lochaber Committee Area Priorities**
- A82 Realignment
 - Transport Infrastructure
 - Marine Infrastructure
 - STEM Centre
 - University Town Status for Fort William
 - New Belford Hospital
 - Health and Wellbeing
 - Increase Housing and Specialist Support Provision
 - Indoor Training Centre
 - All Weather Tourist Facilities
 - Lochaber Common Good Fund
 - Tourism Infrastructure
 - City/Islands Deal Status for Lochaber

Fort William 2040 Development and Assets

Development	Assets
Housing: Existing (Red), New (Orange), Longer Term (Yellow)	Schools: Existing (Green), New/Expanded (Light Green)
Industry: Existing (Blue), New (Light Blue), Longer Term (Purple)	Healthcare: Existing (Pink), New (Light Pink)
Mixed Use: Existing (Light Blue), New (Light Purple), Business/Tourism (Dark Blue)	Indoor Sports: Existing (Light Blue), New (Light Purple)
	Waste Management: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Energy: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Flood Protection: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Active Travel Network Improvements: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Improved Marine Access: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Town Centre: Existing (Black), New (White)
	New Full Fibre Network: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Tourism: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Transport: Existing (Black), New (White)
	Green Corridor Buffers: Existing (Black), New (White)

FW 2040 - a new vision for Fort William and Lochaber

A number of significant developments and service and infrastructure improvements are under consideration for Fort William over the next few years, including major new employment opportunities, a new hospital and educational facilities.

These projects will help to provide new jobs and improve public services for the town and the wider Lochaber area. To help plan for these changes a draft masterplan is being prepared - FW2040, showing how the town and the wider Lochaber area could best take advantage of these developments.

A collaborative approach taken involved a wide range of people with an interest in the future of Fort William. An open public event was held in September 2018, in partnership with officers from Scottish Government and

Highlands and Islands Enterprise. Over 120 participants attending, including members of the public, local community groups, business representatives, public agencies and the private sector. Four key themes have emerged:

A GREAT PLACE TO LIVE

A unique landscape and distinctive local communities. Sufficient and affordable housing is a key issue for the area, as well as facilities and accommodation for visitors, with a need to attract and retain a diverse range of residents, visitors and enterprises.

A CONNECTED PLACE

Highlights the need to maximise opportunities for a diverse range of transport and other connecting networks including new technologies.

A PLACE FACING WATER

Captures the importance of water and the need to take full advantage of existing water assets to support industry, tourism and communities.

A PLACE WITH COLLECTIVE AMBITION

Delivering FW2040 relies on strong partnership and good communication.

Caol Campus scoops top awards

The Caol Joint Campus has scooped two top awards. The project won a commendation for Place-making and also for best new building in The Inverness Architectural Association (IAA) which represents architects from across Highlands and Islands. It also won an award in the Education Buildings Scotland Awards 2018.

The Kingussie Courthouse also won a commendation for Place-making and was the overall winner in the new life for Old Buildings in the IAA Awards.

Caol Campus

Caol community school in Fort William has just been awarded a commendation for best new building at the IAA biennial awards, and was highly commended in the placemaking category. The buildings are designed to make use of natural light, offer views out across Loch Linnhe and Ben Nevis, and to provide something for all members of the community.

The project brings together both denominational and non-denominational education from three previous schools in the Fort William area – Lochyside and St Mary's RC schools - and Caol primary, and cultural and community facilities – hall, library, offices, an arts organisation, weddings and funerals – on the site of the former Caol primary and community hall.



The Barn

The Barn in Ardgay received recognition as a Commendation under the category of 'New Life for Old Buildings'.

The Barn, which provides six business spaces was opened for business at the beginning of December 2017. The Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust, who developed the project, has moved all its team into an office in The Barn.

The Barn forms part of a masterplan for the Ardgay Regeneration Project also includes 4 terraced houses that will be developed by Albyn Housing Association and two self-build plots for sale through The Highland Small Communities Housing Trust.



Photos by A Bright Side Photography

Kingussie Courthouse

The aim of the Kingussie Courthouse Rationalisation project was to secure the future of the Grade B listed building which had fallen into disrepair, by providing new office accommodation, service point and community space and which would allow a number of smaller offices in the area to join together in one central location.

The existing building had lain empty for over 10

years and had serious structural issues and dry rot. The works to the building included the removal and reinstatement of the majority of the interior, external stone repair, a new roof and the creation of a new extension and external courtyard to the rear. The new extension is constructed from timber frame, the design of which allows for future expansion of the office accommodation.



Photos of Kingussie Courthouse

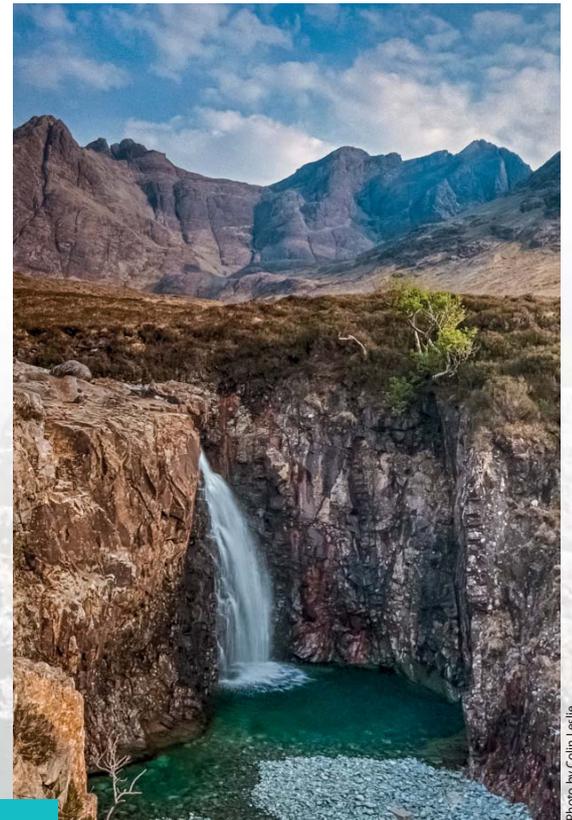
Iconic sites benefit from Council and Tourism fund investment

The Highlands were included in the Lonely Planet's top ten list of places to visit in October, highlighting the importance of tourism to the Highlands.

Six Rural Infrastructure Fund projects have been successful in attracting £1.1m of funding from the £3m available in the first round of the Scottish Government's Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund. These funds are in addition to significant Council and LEADER funding for new facilities to help meet the needs of growing visitor numbers.

Some of the RTIF funding will be used by The Highland Council to create scenic layby viewpoints along the Bealach na Ba (Lochcarron North Coast 500). This project will receive £129,325 from RTIF and a further £55,425 from The Highland Council.

The Highland Council are investing £200,000 to expand the car park together with £200,000 from LEADER and an addition £128,571 along with the £300,000 from the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund to improve the facilities at Storr, that are



“ The Highlands features as number 5 in the Lonely Planet's top ten regions to visit: www.lonelyplanet.com/best-in-travel/regions ”

currently available with the addition of public toilets, motorhome facilities, interpretation, visitor information and improved access to a wider public.

A John Muir Trust community project involving composting toilets and additional car parking at Blabheinn, Skye was another successful application. Additional money has also been invested by the Council in the other iconic sites on Skye, including the Fairy Pools (£100k from the Council and £200k from LEADER), Quiraing (£90k from the Council) and Neist Point (£65k from the Council).

Glenfinnan in Lochaber secured £269,906 of funding for additional parking to cater for 100 cars and 10 motorhomes and buses. This will improve the visitor experience to the large number of visitors attracted to the viaduct and steam-train after seeing the location featured in the popular, Harry Potter films. The Glenfinnan project has also secured match funding from LEADER.



Placement provides six month stepping stone

As I take my next steps forward, I reflect on my time at The Highland Council.

I started work at the Council back in June 2018 and I am now very close to finishing my six month work placement as a Trainee in the Corporate Communications department. I had been struggling to get work after leaving school earlier this year and discovered opportunities for people with no previous paid work experience at the Council.

I applied for a Media Assistant post and less than a week after my interview I had a job, much to my amusement after spending months applying to cafes and hotels. My first day consisted of a launch in the Victorian Market for the HighlandAR Legends app and then following this, three days of promoting the app at XpoNorth. Since then I have been involved with the marketing strategy of HighlandAR which has been a very interesting project to watch develop.

My first few months consisted of me being brought along to resilience meetings, area committees and various project meetings. This was a fantastic way for me to learn how the Council operates and to learn about the massively wide range of services it provides.

The highlights of my work placement have been able to use my creative/artistic skills for informational boards used for the public Waste Branding Strategy and my involvement with the Council's Quality Awards. These have been fantastic opportunities for me to build up my C.V. and portfolio and to gain some valuable team working experiences. I think it's great that the Council was able to make use of my skills despite them not necessarily being part of my job role.

Working in the Communications and Resilience department has also revived my appreciation of writing. I grew bored of years of tedious writing at school and forgot that it was something I actually enjoy. However, writing press releases about the numerous interesting projects going on in the Council has opened my

eyes again and I have found it to be a rewarding aspect of my role.

Transitioning from school to the work environment is a big change and something I had been ready to do for quite some time. It has been fantastic to work at a place where I feel respected. I would certainly recommend working at The Highland Council to other young people who are unsure about their future.

I like that the Council values young employees and does not discriminate against age. I feel lucky to have had this opportunity that has supported me to find my feet in a critical point in my life.

My next step forward is following my passion by applying to university to study art. After this, I hope to go travelling or work abroad before hopefully attending university in 2019. This has been a fantastic way for me to spend my year out and given me a huge amount of valuable experience.

“...fantastic opportunities for me to build up my C.V.”



Consigning single use plastics to the past

Single use plastics will soon become a thing of the past in council sites across the Highlands.

The Highland Council has become the first local authority in Scotland to develop an action plan to reduce the consumption of single use plastics from its sites and schools, and the wider community.

Awareness of the significant environmental damage caused globally by single use plastics is now to the fore of public consciousness. We recognise that, as the local authority with the longest coastline in Scotland, (some 4,412km), this region has a key role to play in reducing plastic waste, as part of its overall sustainable waste strategy.

The actions to be undertaken over the next 18 months include removing non-essential single use items and working with our suppliers to identify sustainable alternatives where appropriate. We will also review recycling infrastructure in key locations across our estate including piloting onsite compost facilities at Lochaber High School and Council headquarters.

A number of businesses across the region are already taking



measures to reduce their reliance on single use plastics. Green Hive and James' Café in Nairn and The Wildcat Café in Fort William are good examples of local businesses striving to become plastic free and do their bit to protect the environment.

The Wildcat Café in Fort William for example, no longer provides disposable cups, encouraging customers to bring their own cup, purchase a reusable cup or borrow a ceramic cup which can be returned to a number of collection points. The Café has its own shop, where

customers can refill their own bags and containers with bread, vegetables, cleaning product refills, and unpackaged dry goods.

Café Manager Stephen Kershaw said:

"Customers have reacted positively to the ban on disposable cups and our customer base has grown by offering packaging-free shopping. We are working to be a zero waste business and always request plastic free packaging when we order from suppliers."

Our Single Use Plastics Strategy and Action Plan can be viewed on the Council's website:

<http://bit.ly/singleuseplasticsstrategy>

Your Refuse

The current journey from collection to landfill

1. Your waste:



Around 140,000 tonnes of waste are produced by Highland households and Highland Council Business Waste customers each year.

At present 43% of your waste is recycled.

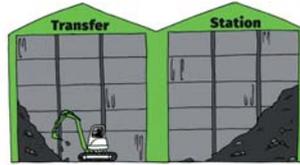
The majority of the remaining 57% is currently destined for landfill.



3. Bulking up for transportation:

Once it has been collected your refuse is taken directly to a landfill site or to 1 of 8 Transfer Stations in Highland.

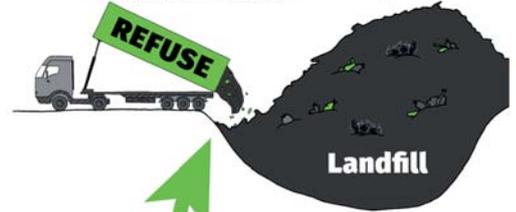
Transfer Stations are used to hold and bulk up larger loads of refuse for more efficient transportation.



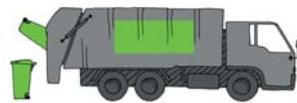
5. Landfilling your refuse:

83,000 tonnes of Highland refuse is landfilled each year.

The annual cost of transporting and landfilling Highland refuse is around £11 million.



2. Refuse collection:



Highland's 108,000 households receive fortnightly refuse collections.

Around 80% of Highland refuse is collected by our bin lorries.

Approximately 20% of your refuse comes into Highland Recycling Centres.



4. Transport to landfill sites:

Highland refuse is sent to 4 landfill sites located in Wick, Aviemore & Fort William within Highland or Stoneyhill in Aberdeen-shire.



The Longman Materials Recovery Facility

Reclaiming value from your waste

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle:



By continuing to reduce, reuse and recycle as much as possible, we can all contribute towards better waste management in Highland. By 2021 the way we dispose of your refuse will also change for the better.



The Longman Materials Recovery Facility:

From 2021 all Highland refuse will be transported to the Longman Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) rather than being landfilled.

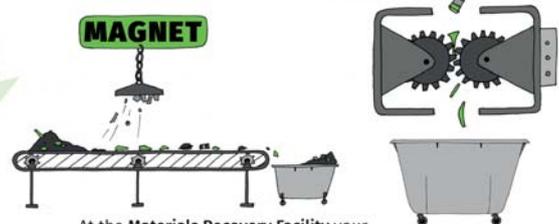


Your refuse is a resource:



At Energy from Waste facilities, Refuse Derived Fuel from the Longman MRF can be used to produce energy and heat, recovering value from resources.

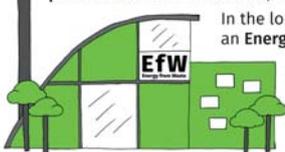
Producing Refuse Derived Fuel:



At the Materials Recovery Facility your refuse will be shredded, screened and sorted to remove some recyclable material to produce Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF).

Energy from your Waste:

Refuse Derived Fuel from the Longman Materials Recovery Facility will initially be used by Energy from Waste (EfW) plants elsewhere in Scotland, the UK or Europe.



In the long-term, construction of an Energy from Waste (EfW) facility at the Longman site may also be considered.

Baling and wrapping

Once processed, the Refuse Derived Fuel will be compacted and wrapped into bales to aid efficient handling and transportation.



Spotlight on

Paul Nevin (Legal Manager - Conveyancing and Commercial)



I'm from Belfast although I haven't lived in Ireland for 25 years. I have very recently left Moray Council to work with The Highland Council. It's an exciting opportunity in a very busy team of experienced solicitors in one of the most beautiful parts of the world.

It would be fair to say that my career path has been pretty circuitous and largely unplanned. I qualified as a psychiatric nurse in 1991 and worked in 'locked wards' as they were then called. My exposure to the sharp end of mental health legislation sparked an interest in the legal profession. In the late 90s I studied law at Southbank University and the College of Law in London while continuing to work as a nurse.

I moved from London to rural Aberdeenshire in 2004 and in 2005 Moray Council gave me a wonderful opportunity. I undertook pre-diploma training and independent study as an alternative to the qualifying law degree. I worked with the property and contract team in Elgin until October of this year.

It is a sad truth that recent years have seen a reduction in the number of local authorities offering traineeships and Moray and Highland Council's are amongst that number.

However learners still get vital legal experience in both organisations via summer placements and similar arrangements.

There is no such thing as a typical day when you're a local authority lawyer. Managing a varied caseload in collaboration with other in-house professionals from multiple disciplines all in terms of strategic directions from local and national politicians keeps us on our toes!

The Council is a Planning Authority, Education Authority, Roads Authority, Social Work Authority, Harbour Authority and Housing Authority, to name but a few. It provides public services from cradle to grave. Its assets range from lands held on ancient charters granted in the 12th Century, through to cold war bunkers and onto futuristic renewal energy infrastructure.

Community empowerment in the form of community asset transfers at an unprecedented volume is likely to keep us pretty busy in the future. I'm also involved with LawCare who are a fantastic organisation promoting and supporting good mental health and wellbeing in the legal community.

Highland Council scoops trophy at IRRV Awards

A team of Highland Council staff have lifted the IRRV Benefits & Welfare Reform Team of the Year Award at a prestigious UK award ceremony held in October 2018 in Telford.

The Benefits & Welfare Reform Team of the Year category for the UK was sponsored by Knowledgehub. IRRV explains:

"The Awards Panel were looking for organisations to demonstrate they were raising standards of service to achieve high levels of performance, customer satisfaction and effective administrative procedures in all aspects of welfare benefits. There needed to be evidence of excellence in delivery and a customer focused service."

The Highland Council's entry described their dynamic and customer-focussed model which provides local services at the point of need and single access to Council entitlements. Their impressive performance, translates into tangible outcomes for local people in a manner that improves their financial and overall wellbeing.

Effective leadership, highly skilled and motivated staff and their collaboration with partners are key to their performance, including increasing benefit take-up by £6M for customers and delivering service cost savings over £1.3M.



Growing with the Council

Audrey Holmes has embarked on a whole new career while at The Highland Council. She started as a Clerical Assistant in Social Work in 2005 and worked in various areas in the council until she discovered her passion - Civil Engineering.

During her time in Social Work, Audrey prepared paperwork for meetings, answered invoices and assisted in other admin based roles. She then moved to Housing Properties as a Senior Clerical Assistant, and roles in Planning and Business Support Finance, but didn't feel she had found what she wanted to do. When the position of a Technical Assistant came up, she felt "it was an opportunity to do something different so why not?" She had never even thought about a career in Civil Engineering until working in this role.

The new post brought her on site with the Project Design Unit staff. For the first time, she was working outside of the office in various locations across the Highlands and really enjoyed watching and learning from the other members of her team. She decided she

didn't want to sit at a desk 9-5 every day: this is what she wanted to do.



By November 2016 Audrey had gained a formal offer on The Highland Council's CITB Apprenticeship programme and she had also gained a place on an HNC Civil Engineering course at UHI College. She was able to manage all this through block release, where she worked three weeks at The Highland Council and then did the following three weeks at college as a student. Audrey said:

"I'm not going to lie, the HNC course was hard, but the guys on my team were really supportive and encouraging throughout my study which helped me to keep on going."

She explained that during her weeks studying at college, her colleagues would regularly check in to see if she needed help and managing the workload and deadlines. Despite juggling work and education at the same time, Audrey said she was happy to be working so hard because she is so passionate about her subject. She had never enjoyed studying previously, but this was something different. She could see a promising future for herself with an end goal in something she loved.

Audrey has recently gained her HNC qualification with very high creditable commentaries and grades. She is currently working on site to gain the experience and knowledge she needs to become a Technician. She explained:

"It's all a learning curve for me - eventually after I gain the experience I need I will be able to do this independently."

She feels that the Council has been very supportive in helping to develop her career.

"I never thought this would be the career route I would go down and I am really grateful to my boss, Mike Stephens and the opportunities the Council has provided me."

Article by Freya Povlsen



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Benefits of being bilingual highlighted in new video



A new video titled “Educational Growth” aimed at parents who are thinking of enrolling their children in Gaelic Medium Education was launched in November.



It features a range of different people who explain the benefits of Gaelic Medium Education and of being bilingual.

Professor Antonella Sorace from the University of Edinburgh gives an insight into how young children can pick up languages quickly and the skills a person can gain from learning more than one language.

The video also features the experiences of parents who enrolled their children into Gaelic education without speaking the language themselves. It answers fears and questions parents may have about the opportunity, such

as how they are able to help with homework and how they can still feel very much included in their child’s education.

Musicians featuring in the video, include singer-songwriter Robert Robertson and member of the Red Hot Chilli Peppers, Chad Smith, who discuss the benefits of Gaelic education and the effects it has on a child’s future growth.

The video was created to demonstrate to parents how enriching, inclusive and unique Gaelic Education can be and to encourage them to take advantage of Gaelic Medium opportunities.

Councillor Alister Mackinnon, Chair of the Highland Council’s Gaelic Strategy and Implementation Group, said:

“This is an excellent video which explains simply and clearly the many benefits of learning more than one language. It shows parents how engaging this type of education can be and how it can provide their child with skills they may not be able to develop elsewhere.”

The video was created by the Council’s Gaelic Team and was funded by the Scottish Government. The Team worked with editor, Donald Ewen who has a key role in the Gaelic soap ‘Bannan’.

The video can be viewed on the Council’s YouTube site at:

[www.youtube.com/user/
TheHighlandCouncil](http://www.youtube.com/user/TheHighlandCouncil)



Photos are stills taken from the video and credited to Fas Foghlaim.

Explore Inverness

Photo by Ewen Weir the spoon



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Inverness is so much more than a beautiful cultural capital – it is a centre of digital opportunities and innovation, boasting free wifi across the city and a new unique augmented reality app.

HighlandAR Legends uses augmented reality to bring the legends and history of Inverness to life. Download the app, then follow the trail to find the legends on the map. Simply point your device at the target pictures to see Nessie swim, look over the shoulder of the Brahan Seer, peer into the prisoners' cell, watch the unicorn and fairies play, and much more...

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CHAMPS Awards Evening

The CHAMPS Awards were held at Inverness Town House on 24th October 2018, to recognise and celebrate the achievements of CHAMP mentors and mentees.

The Highland Champion "CHAMPS" Board, which The Highland Council plays an important role in, provides a unique opportunity for young people to have a voice, be empowered and be able to influence policy and practice across all sectors.

CHAMPS Boards are forums which create unique spaces for care experienced young people to meet with key decision-makers, service leads and elected members to influence the design and delivery of services which directly affect them. They are also a mechanism for young people to hold their Corporate Parents to account.

It can be difficult for young people to get into Inverness to access services and to help with this problem, the Council has managed to get discounted rates for young people aged 16+ to use public bus services. All Stagecoach routes from zone 1 – 4 are now offered at a half-price day return.

“ a unique opportunity for young people to have a voice, be empowered and be able to influence policy and practice ”



Photo by Even Weatherspoon

This year has also seen the opening of the new hub in Clachnaharry which has been created to support employability pathways for care experienced young people who wish to go into work after leaving high school, instead of going into further learning. Soon there will be a full-time Employment advisor working from the hub. This will increase the amount of support available to young people and strengthen links with partners within the city. The hub also offers the opportunity to work on independent living skills with young people.



CHAMPS award winners gather on the stairs of Inverness Town House

Photo by Even Weatherspoon

Council staff swap Secret Santa for Highland Foodbank donations.

Welfare staff within The Highland Council's UK Award winning Benefits and Welfare Reform Team have decided to forego their office Secret Santa tradition and instead donate to Blythswood's Highland Foodbank this Christmas.

Sheila McKandie, The Highland Council's Benefits and Welfare Manager explained:

"On a daily basis we work with the dedicated team at Blythswood Highland Foodbank directing people to them who are in urgent need. At this time of year when some offices are signing up for Secret Santa gifting we decided that rather than buying each presents we would rather spend the equivalent amount of money on buying vital and necessary food for those most in need."

The Council's Welfare staff support the most vulnerable individuals and families in the Highlands to maximise their incomes by legitimately claiming all benefits and entitlements they are eligible to receive. On an almost daily basis the team provides clients with vouchers to access local foodbanks and also distribute Blythswood food parcels which are held by the team in local Council offices.

The team has first-hand experience of reducing poverty in Highland and have a grass roots understanding of the lifeline that the food bank provides for so many residents.

For some, the foodbank is used as a last resort having exhausted all other sources of support for residents, many of whom have complex needs. Demand for food increases during the winter

months and Blythswood depend on increased donations during this time.

To find out more about the Highland Foodbank visit Blythswood's website at:

www.blythswood.org/highland-foodbank



Policy priorities for Highland in post BREXIT

Since the referendum decision to leave the European Union, The Highland Council has considered and made representations on a number of issues which have potential implications for the Highland economy and Highland communities.

EU funding has brought hundreds of millions of pounds of assistance to the region over the past 40 years which has been critical to the region's growth. The Council has taken every opportunity to work with partners to identify to the Scottish and UK Governments, the potential implications in Highland arising from BREXIT to ensure we have the right support in place to allow Highland to continue to thrive.

The Highland Council agreed key policy areas on which to lobby post BREXIT at its meeting in September. There is a need to ensure that Scottish and UK policy addresses the economic circumstances of Highland, to ensure that the challenges of living and working in the region are identified, and that the case for investment and support is made to enable the region to realise



Photo: Cllr Jimmy Gray with speakers from the seminar

its full potential. In this context, the Council has agreed that regional policy; inward migration, access to markets and agriculture crofting and land management, are priority issues to be progressed.

In order to support the Council's continued engagement and ensure the needs of our businesses and communities are recognised, a Brexit seminar was held on Friday 30th November at Council Headquarters. This discussed potential impacts and how these might be addressed, with speakers from The University of Strathclyde, SCDI, SRUC, the University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) and Scotland Europa.

Councillor Jimmy Gray, Administration lead for European matters, said:

"Discussions depend on good will between all parties and governments. This is a very complex subject which needs us all working together. There are a lot of partners involved, all with different priorities and we need to find some common ground. If we can have a clear voice on priorities across the Highlands and Islands, we have a better chance of success."

Brexit activity including Committee reports and consultation responses can be found on our website:

www.highland.gov.uk/brexit

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Charles Kennedy Building

The Highland Council's offices in the new Charles Kennedy Building at Achintore Road in Fort William were formally opened in September.

The project saw a former secondary school, which had lain empty for twenty five years, take on a new role serving the community and delivering public services for the Lochaber Area. For the renovation of the large B-listed building, the Council received a grant of £240,178 from Historic Environment Scotland. The B-listed section of the building now accommodates Highland Council offices, Service Point, Registration Service, Council Chambers and meeting rooms.



Photo by A Bright Side Photography





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