

**Strathnaver Museum Letters of Support**

Sandra Munro, Chair, Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra Community Council

Julie Allen, Secretary, Scourie Community Council

Michael Simpson, Chair, Tongue, Melness and Skerray Community Council

Jim A. Johnston, local resident

Jamie Stone MP

Mary Mackay, Chair, Mackay Country Community Trust

Katherine Wood, Head Teacher, North Coast Campus

Lorna Cruickshank, Independent Museums Support Officer, High Life Highland

Kirsteen Mackay, Chair, CVS North

David Whiteford OBE, Chairman, North Highland Initiative

Dr Devon McHugh, Senior Partnership Manager, Museum Galleries Scotland

Joanne Howdle, Curator, Caithness Horizons

Gemma Mackenzie, Senior Social Care Worker, Melvich CCU

**Bettyhill, Strathnaver and Altnaharra Community Council**  
**[REDACTED] By Thurso, Caithness, [REDACTED]**

Dear Sir / Madam

**STRATHNAVER MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT**

We are delighted to support Strathnaver Museum in its aspiration to develop a heritage hub for North-west Sutherland which will bring educational, social and economic benefit to our area.

Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors and future generations by preserving, promoting and sharing the history of the Mackay Country. The Strathnaver Museum delivers valuable services to the people it caters for and we support the proposal to improve the building and upgrade these.

Strathnaver Museum and the historic church it occupies is at the heart of the history of the Clearances. This makes it culturally central to the story of the Highlands and of Scotland as a whole. But the Clearances don't just relate to Scottish History – the repercussions of the Clearances echo across the world and have impacted on nations throughout the former British Empire. Consequently, the collections within the care of the Strathnaver Museum are internationally significant.

The relationship between cultural work and economic regeneration within Scotland's communities has been noted at national level. Cultural resources are of interest particular to descendants of the Scottish diaspora who visit their areas of origin to learn about the lives of their predecessors. This confers significant economic benefit locally and as well as at regional and national levels. The increasing popularity of the North Coast 500 is a key driver for future economic prosperity and a redeveloped Strathnaver Museum could provide a valuable addendum to that route.

Yours faithfully

**[REDACTED]**

**Sandra Munro (Chair)**  
**10<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

## **Fiona Mackenzie**

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**From:** julie Allen [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 April 2019 20:41  
**To:** Fiona Mackenzie  
**Subject:** Re: form

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to offer the support of Scourie and district community council, to the Strathnaver Museum in their bid to raise the funds to complete the refurbishment of Strathnaver Museum as a heritage hub for north west Sutherland project.

We feel strongly that the Museum's refurbishment project will deliver a range of educational, social and economic benefits to the local area and further afield.

With the continued success of the NC500 the Activity Programme proposed by Strathnaver Museum which will run alongside the refurbishment project will help to promote our area as a tourist destination and ultimately attract more visitors to Caithness and Sutherland. Visitors are increasingly looking for unique experiences. A programme celebrating our local natural and cultural heritage will provide a valuable opportunity to showcase what we have to offer and provide memorable experiences for our visitors.

It will be an essential resource for our young people and Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors and future generations by preserving, promoting and sharing the history and culture of Mackay Country. The organisation shares their knowledge with local people and visitors through innovative historical research projects which provide training opportunities, reduce isolation and preserve historical knowledge for future generations.

There would also be opportunities for employment which is also very much needed.

Scourie and district community council are very hopeful that the Museum will be successful in getting your support and the funds it needs to complete this very worthwhile project.

Yours sincerely,  
Julie Allen (secretary)

On Wed, Apr 17, 2019 at 2:37 PM Fiona Mackenzie <[fiona@strathnavermuseum.org.uk](mailto:fiona@strathnavermuseum.org.uk)> wrote:

Thank you so much Julie. We are applying to the Natural Cultural and Heritage Fund in the first instance but will also be using the letters of support for other funders too so if you could address it 'To whom it may concern' that would be fantastic.

Thanks again,

Fiona

**Fiona Mackenzie**

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 22 April 2019 14:06  
**To:** Fiona Mackenzie  
**Subject:** Re: Strathnaver Museum Refurbishment

Hello Fiona

Tongue Melness Skerry Community Council fully support the aims and ambitions of Strathnaver Museum in your refurbishment project.

It's securing its future and will provide a destination for cultural heritage in Sutherland.

Good luck.

Regards Michael Simpson Chair Tongue Melness Skerry Community Council

Sent from Samsung tablet.

----- Original message -----

**From:** Fiona Mackenzie <fiona@strathnavermuseum.org.uk>  
**Date:** 11/04/2019 17:16 (GMT+00:00)  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Strathnaver Museum Refurbishment

Hi Michael

I'm just writing a quick email to give you an update on the Strathnaver Museum refurbishment project and to ask if you would be able to write us a letter of support on behalf of Tongue Community Council to accompany our funding applications. I've attached a brief synopsis of where we are to date for your information and as I know you'll be very busy I've added some suggestions of things that could be included in a letter.

The total project cost will be a little over £1.5m and we've secured just over £66,500 to date. We are targeting the Natural and Cultural Heritage Fund (NCHF) and National Lottery Heritage Fund as the major contributors. The plan is to have the funding in place by the end of the year with works starting in 2020.

We'd be delighted if you'd be able to write a letter of support which we can use as part of our application to the NCHF which is due to be submitted on 22<sup>nd</sup> April. If you've any questions do let me know and you can view the design proposal on our website here: <https://www.strathnavermuseum.org.uk/current-projects/refurbishment/>

All the best,

Fiona

  
Strathnaver Museum  
Clachan  
Bettyhill

Dear Sirs

**Proposed redevelopment**


I have been indirectly involved with Strathnaver Museum since its inception in 1977 and have observed its evolution over all these years. It began, through the inspiration of the late historian, Dr. Ian Grimble, as a grassroots operation involving Farr Secondary School, now Farr High School, in the preparation of its first exhibitions. These centred, quite rightly, on the Sutherland Clearances of the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century which were very clearly exemplified in Strathnaver and which remain a hot topic to this day.

Now, while retaining these at its kernel, it has widened its scope considerably, providing a wider window to shed light on the past throughout its catchment area in North Sutherland.

The ambitious plans which have been formulated, including adaption to the building as well as increase in the scope of its displays, will allow it to move forward towards a positive future and enable it to participate fully in the cultural and economic growth of its sparsely populated and disadvantaged hinterland.

I urge funders to look kindly on Strathnaver Museum and give it the wherewithal it requires to continue to progress with confidence in to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Yours faithfully

  
Jim A. Johnston (Teacher at Farr from 1973-2013)  
10<sup>th</sup> September 2017



**Jamie Stone MP**  
Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross

17 April 2019

Fiona Mackenzie  
Strathnaver Museum  
Clachan Bettyhill  
Thurso  
Caithness  
KW14 7SS

Our Ref: JS4144

**To Whom It May Concern**

By this letter and, as the elected Member of Parliament for the Caithness area, I fully support the proposals put forward by Strathnaver Museum committee for the refurbishment of the Museum.

I understand that refurbishment project will deliver a range of educational, social and economic benefits to the local area and further afield. I personally know members of the Strathnaver Museum committee and I can honestly say that they are wholly committed and experienced in delivering a project such as this. Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural by preserving, promoting and sharing the history and culture of Mackay Country. The organisation shares their knowledge through innovative historical research projects which provide training opportunities, reduce isolation and preserving historical knowledge for future generations.

Due to our remote geography, opportunities for local people to attend cultural events can be limited. Strathnaver Museum provide a valuable cultural service to local people by staging world class cultural events. The Activity Programme proposed by Strathnaver Museum which will run alongside the refurbishment project will help to promote our area as a tourist destination and ultimately attract more visitors to Caithness and Sutherland. Visitors are increasingly looking for unique experiences.

A programme celebrating our local natural and cultural heritage will provide a valuable opportunity to showcase what we have to offer and provide memorable experiences for our visitors. The importance of cultural work in relation to economic regeneration within Scotland's communities has been noted at national level. Such resources are particularly of interest to the Scottish diaspora who wish to visit the areas their descendants came from and learn more about their lives. This has a significant economic benefit for the area both locally and regionally as well as at a national level. The increasingly popularity of the North Coast 500 route is a key driver for our economic prosperity and Strathnaver Museum provide a valuable service to visitors.

If the development plans are successful, these activities will also assist with capacity building in the tourism sector, which is of vital importance not only for the long-term survival of Strathnaver Museum and others like it but also for the creation of new jobs which are urgently required in Caithness.

Yours sincerely

Jamie Stone MP

Westminster Office: House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA Tel: 0207 219 1654  
Constituency Office: Hillview, Market Street, Tain IV19 1AR Tel: 01862 892726  
Email: [jamie.stone.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:jamie.stone.mp@parliament.uk)

# MACKAY COUNTRY COMMUNITY TRUST LIMITED

The most North westerly corner of the  
Scottish Highlands

Registered Office



[www.mackaycountry.com](http://www.mackaycountry.com)

September 2017

## STRATHNAVER MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT

Since the inception of Mackay Country Community Trust in 2000 several projects have been carried out. These projects have been based around the heritage and history of the area and the work has been integral and cooperative to the aims of Strathnaver Museum.

Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors and future generations by preserving, promoting and sharing the history of Mackay Country. The Strathnaver Museum delivers valuable services to the people it caters for and we support the proposal to improve the building and increase the services it offers. The collections within the care of the Strathnaver Museum are internationally significant.

Ensuring Strathnaver Museum meets the needs of the area and remains a valuable resource for future generations this redevelopment is regarded as an absolute necessity. An investment by funders will be recognised as a value for money and a recognition of the value of culture heritage and ensuring a long term collective memory of the locality.

*Mary Mackay*

Mary Mackay  
Chair.

Mackay Country Community Trust Limited is a company limited by guarantee registered in Scotland No. 331267 and a registered Scottish Charity No SCO38792

To provide a structure to allow the development of partnership between the communities and community groups operating in and comprising Mackay Country.



**HEAD TEACHER Mrs K Wood**  
Date 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Telephone: 01847807010

e-mail: [farr.primary@highland.gov.uk](mailto:farr.primary@highland.gov.uk) / [farr.high@highland.gov.uk](mailto:farr.high@highland.gov.uk)

To Whom it May Concern

I should like to express my support for the Refurbishment Project funding application being put forwards by Strathnaver Museum.

Strathnaver Museum is a place of great importance; it is the repository of information pertaining to our unique geographical area and our unique historical footprint. It has been looked after and nurtured over the past 40 years by a series of custodians who understood that "to know your future, you must first know your past".

As we move forwards in an ever-changing world, I feel it is imperative that the young people of our area are given the chance to understand how significant their role is. Through the proposed refurbishment, they will be able to gain a much greater understanding of their cultural make-up and the important place the people of the Highlands have always inhabited – both locally and within the wider world. An understanding of their own identity and how it has been created will instill confidence within our young people and empower them. These are, after all, the future custodians of our past.

More than this, through having access to the proposed range of services Strathnaver Museum would like to offer, our young people will be able to learn new skills which they can use both within their education and the world of work. In the past the Museum has hosted students on work experience placements – we would love to develop this further and explore how our schools can engage with the opportunities the new developments would afford.

As Head Teacher of the three local primaries and secondary school, I very much appreciate the importance of Strathnaver Museum for the people of our area, both young and old and I should like give my support to their efforts to develop this important resource.

Yours sincerely

Katherine

Katherine Wood  
Head Teacher  
North Coast Campus

**HIGHLAND COUNCIL - Education Department**





Strathnaver Museum  
Clachan  
Bettyhill,  
Thurso  
Caithness  
KW14 7SS

Please ask for: Lorna Cruickshank

Our Ref:

Date: 18 April 2019

Dear Mr Mackay

### **Strathnaver Museum Development Plans**

I am writing in support of your excellent plans to refurbish the existing museum. High Life Highland supports your museum as part of a network of 19 museums across the Highlands through a Service Level Agreement which I have monitored for over 10 years. During this time, the ongoing commitment and enthusiasm of Board members, volunteers and staff has been outstanding. Through this energy the scope and quality of projects have made a significant impact on both with the local community as well as tourist visitors.

Strathnaver Museum and iconic church are central to the history of the Clearances, a story which is of national and international importance. For this cultural hub to thrive it is essential that the refurbishment works alongside the activity programme is carried out.

Highlife Highland fully endorses Strathnaver Museum's application and is working alongside Museums Heritage Highland to involve museums in the development of the Inverness Castle project.

Yours sincerely

**Lorna Cruickshank**  
**Independent Museums Support Officer**



To support the voluntary and community sector in North and North West  
Sutherland



To whom this may concern

Dear Sir / Madam

### **STRATHNAVER MUSEUM REDEVELOPMENT**

We are delighted to support Strathnaver Museum in their aspirations to develop a heritage hub for north west Sutherland which will bring educational, social and economic benefits to our area.

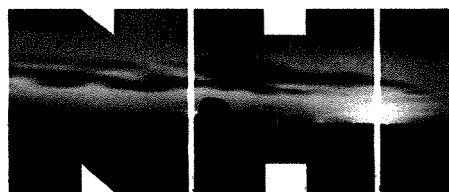
Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors and future generations by preserving, promoting and sharing the history of Mackay Country. The Strathnaver Museum delivers valuable services to the people it caters for and we support the proposal to improve the building and increase the services it offers.

Strathnaver Museum and the iconic church it resides in is at the heart of the history of the Clearances. This makes it culturally central to the story of the Highlands and of Scotland as a whole. But the Clearances don't just relate to Scottish History – the repercussions of the Clearances echo across the world and have impacted on nations throughout the former British Empire. Therefore, the collections within the care of the Strathnaver Museum are internationally significant.

The importance of cultural work in relation to economic regeneration within Scotland's communities has been noted at national level. Such resources are particularly of interest to the Scottish diaspora who wish to visit the areas their descendants came from and learn more about their lives. This has a significant economic benefit for the area both locally and regionally as well as at a national level. The increasingly popularity of the North Coast 500 route is a key driver for our economic prosperity and Strathnaver Museum provide a valuable service to visitors.

Yours faithfully

Kirsteen Mackay  
Chair  
CVS North



**North Highland Initiative**  
Success is in our nature

The North Highland Initiative  
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Wick  
Caithness  
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Tel: 01955 609806  
Fax: 0845 838 0490  
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18<sup>th</sup> April 2019

Dear Fiona,

**Further Development of Strathnaver Museum**

On behalf of the North Highland Initiative I would like to confirm our support for the further development of Strathnaver Museum. Strathnaver Museum's refurbishment project will deliver a range of educational, social and economic benefits to the local area and further afield.

Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors and future generations by preserving, promoting and sharing the history and culture of Mackay Country. The organisation shares their knowledge with local people and visitors through innovative historical research projects which provide training opportunities, reduce isolation and preserve historical knowledge for future generations.

Strathnaver Museum and the iconic church it resides in is at the heart of the history of the Clearances. This, in turn makes it culturally central to the story of the Highlands and of Scotland as a whole. But the Clearances don't just relate to Scottish History – the repercussions of the Clearances echo across the world and have impacted on nations throughout the former British Empire. It's therefore of no surprise that the collections within the care of the Strathnaver Museum are of huge international significance. Due to our remote geography opportunities for local people to attend cultural events can be limited. Strathnaver Museum provide a valuable cultural service to local people by staging world class cultural events.

The Activity Programme proposed by Strathnaver Museum which will run alongside the refurbishment project will help to promote our

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area as a tourist destination and ultimately attract more visitors to Caithness and Sutherland. Visitors are increasingly looking for unique experiences. A programme celebrating our local natural and cultural heritage will provide a valuable opportunity to showcase what we have to offer and provide memorable experiences for our visitors.

The importance of cultural work in relation to economic regeneration within Scotland's communities has been noted at national level. Such resources are particularly of interest to the Scottish diaspora who wish to visit the areas their descendants came from and learn more about their lives. This has a significant economic benefit for the area both locally and regionally as well as at a national level. The increasingly popularity of the North Coast 500 route is a key driver for our economic prosperity and Strathnaver Museum provide a valuable service to visitors.

These activities will also assist with capacity building in the tourism sector, which is of vital importance not only for the long-term survival of Strathnaver Museum and others like it but also for the creation of new jobs which are urgently required in Caithness and North Sutherland with the gradual decommissioning of the Dounreay Nuclear Research Establishment.

On behalf of North Highland Initiative, I wish you well with your funding quest.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of David Whiteford.

David Whiteford OBE  
Chairman NHI

19 April 2019

**Letter of Support: Strathnaver Museum Refurbishment Project**

I am writing to indicate the support of Museums Galleries Scotland for Strathnaver Museum's proposed project of refurbishment, which is currently in development.

Strathnaver Museum's refurbishment project has the potential to deliver a range of educational, social, and economic benefits to the local area and further afield, and to support the Museum to better contribute to the delivery of *Going Further: The National Strategy for Scotland's Museums and Galleries*. This project also has the potential to highlight ways in which museums have the potential to deliver across the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.

In particular, the National Strategy seeks to maximise the potential of our collections and culture (NS Aim 1), and strengthen connections between museums, people and places to inspire greater public participation, learning and well-being (NS Aim 2). Strathnaver Museum provides a valuable cultural service to local people, visitors, and future generations by preserving, promoting, and sharing the history and culture of Mackay Country. The organisation shares their knowledge with local people and visitors through innovative historical research projects which provide training opportunities, reduce isolation, and increase collective understanding of local heritage. Strathnaver Museum plays an important role in place-making within Caithness and Sutherland. The remote geography of the area means that opportunities for local people to attend cultural events can be limited: Strathnaver Museum is an invaluable cultural service for the local community, and has the potential to further develop their role as a cultural and social hub through developing their provision and through the development of a programme of world-class events.

The National Strategy also aims to foster a sustainable future for sector organisations and encourage a culture of enterprise (NS Aim 4), and foster a culture of collaboration, innovation and ambition (NS Aim 5). The outcomes of the proposed project align closely with these aims and we are excited about the Museum's ability to continue to make a substantial future contribution to Scotland's museums sector. The Activity Programme proposed by Strathnaver Museum as part of the wider refurbishment project is intended to promote the Museum and local area as a tourist destination. The goal in offering unique and culturally-authentic programming, based in the collections that tell the story of the area, will be to provide memorable experiences for visitors to the area, ultimately attracting increased numbers to Caithness and Sutherland. Strathnaver Museum and its iconic church building are at the heart of the history of the Highland Clearances, rendering the Museum central to the story of the Highlands and the development of



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E-mail: [admin@museums galleries scotland.org.uk](mailto:admin@museums galleries scotland.org.uk) Web: <http://www.museums galleries scotland.org.uk>

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VAT No. GB 416 0385 73

Scotland as a whole. The collections within the care of the Strathnaver Museum carry a significance that resonates with visitors worldwide, offering as they do a physical manifestation of the repercussions of the Highland Clearances which speaks especially strongly to audiences from the Scottish diaspora (NS Aim 6).

The Museum has indicated that they will be seeking funding from Museums Galleries Scotland as part of this project; while this letter indicates our general support for the redevelopment of the Museum and the associated programming, this letter should not be taken as a commitment for funding.

Best regards,



Dr Devon McHugh  
Senior Partnerships Manager

Fiona Mackenzie,  
Development Manager,  
Strathnaver Museum,  
Clachan,  
Bettyhill,  
KW14 7SR.

7<sup>th</sup> September 2017.

**Strathnaver Museum Redevelopment Project**

Dear Fiona,

As Strathnaver Museum's *"Museum Mentor"* for the Arts Council England/Museums Galleries Scotland administered Accreditation Scheme I am writing to offer my wholehearted support for your applications to secure funding to redevelop Strathnaver Museum.

Strathnaver Museum is a key nodal point in the story of the Highland Clearance, which is of international importance. However, the Museum's current environmental conditions, storage facilities, access for people with disabilities, outdated interpretation and lack of a proper education/community learning space does not do justice to the importance of the Museum's Collection and the iconic Church it is located within. Over the five years that I have been involved with Strathnaver Museum great leaps forward have been made in regards to Collection care, storage, documentation, access to the Museum's Collection and community engagement, outreach and lifelong learning. If funding is secured to redevelop the Museum's services and facilities it can only go from strength to strength and enable Strathnaver to become a central *"hub"* and a centre of excellence for heritage in North Sutherland.

These activities will also assist with capacity building in the tourism sector, which is of vital importance not only for the long-term survival of Strathnaver Museum and others like it but also for the creation of new jobs which are urgently required in Caithness and North Sutherland with the gradual decommissioning of the Dounreay Nuclear Research Establishment.

Kind regards,

Joanne Howdle BA (Hons), MA, PgDip, PgCert, AMA,  
Curator.

**Fiona Mackenzie**

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**From:** MACKENZIE, Gemma (NHS HIGHLAND) [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 09 May 2019 10:43  
**To:** fiona@strathnavermuseum.org.uk  
**Subject:** Loan of museum items.

Hello Fiona,

First I want to apologise for taking so long to send you this email of thanks for the loan of your Museum items earlier this year.

The residents and staff at Melvich Community Care resource unit enjoyed the many activities we created centred around the items. The talking suitcase was a particular hit as well as the school memorabilia. Loaning these items was a great asset to us as we had tried asking in the local communities for items of interest, but had been unable to source any until I spoke to you. For people living with dementia touching, seen and chatting about items from the past can be a particular comfort. We found that some of our residents, that do not chose to interact with others often became quite animated in discussion about their experiences with these items and this lead to some wonderful conversations about life in the Highlands during their youth, the staff were quite amazed by the impact of having the items laid out in communal area's caused. Residents that normally wander often, would sit for spells looking at the pictures and handling the items. The strap was a particular item of conversation and stories of getting the strap and how society views discipline now compared to then was among many of our conversations.

We are delighted to hear that you are planning a refurbishment for Strathnaver Museum to update its services and hope once the refurbishment has taken place we will be able to attend any activities and events you hold, as currently the Museum is not accessible for our residents or day care service users and they have appreciated greatly the chance to loan items from the museum, this has definitely spurred an interest in them carrying out a history based activity, but would benefit socially from the opportunity to visit the museum, meet other visitors, your staff and experience the displays and items you have there first hand. We feel that the museum is an important part of our community and a fantastic way of recording our history, it is a key venue to encouraging the youth to take an interest in the past and encouraging different generations to meet and have discussions about our local communities and area.

We have different projects running about the past throughout the year, at the moment our project is Weddings, so if you have any items of interest that we could loan or that a member of staff could take into the unit to do a talk on about the item.

Again thank you.

Kind Regards,

Gemma

**Gemma Mackenzie**  
**Senior Social Care Worker,**  
**Melvich CCU,**  
**Sinclair Court,**  
**KW14 7LY**