

Staff Connections Ceanglaichean Luchd-obrach



Staff Bulletin | November 2019 | Issue 34

Full list of Quality Awards winners on page 4

Quality Awards

In this issue:

- Priorities in Skye 2
- Pre-Election Guidance 3
- Message from the Chief 4
- Festive arrangements 6



Ambitious

Sustainable

Connected

Priorities in Skye

Chief Executive Donna Manson visited Skye in November meeting with staff, schools, community groups and local ward members. Also visiting Skye, were interim Head of Education Nicky Grant and Executive Chief Officer for Infrastructure and Environment, Malcolm MacLeod who will be the lead officer for Skye.



Donna Manson in north of Skye



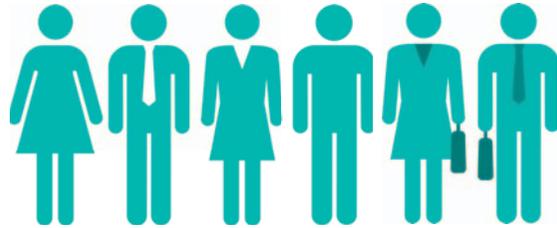
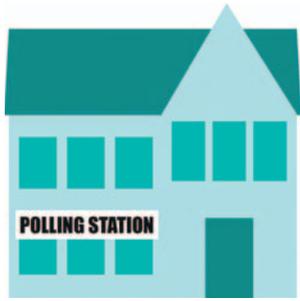
Malcolm MacLeod at the Quirang



Donna and Nicky Grant (Interim Head of Education) meeting staff in Portree High School



Donna and Malcolm with Engineer Gordon Macdonald visiting local tourist infrastructure



Pre-Election Guidance

The General Election takes place on 12th December 2019

The Council is prohibited by law from publishing any material which appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party. During the pre-election period there is a need for heightened sensitivity to ensure that Council resources are not used in any way that relates to party political issues or the election campaign.



- Always act in a politically neutral way;
- Do not use or allow the use of Council stationery/equipment/transport or other resources for party political or election campaign issues;
- Do not display party political or election campaign material in Council premises or in/on Council vehicles;
- Do not publish any Council material or stage any Council events which appear to be designed to support any one political party or candidate;
- Staff as well as children in our care should not be used in any election material or election publicity;
- Respond positively to requests from candidates for briefings and visits where they can be accommodated without interfering with operational needs.

For further information there are guidance sheets online:

Pre-election Guidance for Staff:

www.bit.ly/PreElectionGuidanceStaff

Pre-election Guidance for Members:

www.bit.ly/PreElectionGuidanceMembers

Pre-election Guidance for Schools:

www.bit.ly/PreElectionGuidanceSchools

Pre-election Guidance FAQs:

www.bit.ly/PreElectionGuidanceFAQs

Your votes journey in Highland:

https://youtu.be/Tpye5deA_w8

Quality Awards winners 2019

Thank you

to everyone who put forward nominations and entered projects for the 2019 Highland Council Quality Awards. This year the standard of entries has been exceptional.

Employee of the Year

A long serving Housing Officer who has worked tirelessly to ensure tenants are given the support they need is The Highland Council's Employee of the Year. Ron Archer was presented with his award during a ceremony held on Thursday 14th November in Inverness Town House.

Runners up for this award were Vicky MacDonald who works at Inverlochry Primary in Fort William as a Pupil Support and Children's Services Worker and Fiona



Emslie, a Learning and Development Adviser.

The Awards, were sponsored by Viridor, Hub North Scotland, Zurich Municipal, Morrison Construction and WIPRO with Enterprise Car Club providing additional hospitality.

Communities across the Highlands were invited to nominate Council staff who they felt deserved special recognition and this year the Community Awards went to Community Payback Officer Jamie Sinclair who was nominated by Golspie Community Council; Community Works Officer Alan Johnstone who was put forward by Kilmorack Community Council, and Waste Officer Katrina Taylor, nominated by Garve and District.

Digital Support Officer John Grieg was named **Trainee of the Year**. John joined the Council as a Youth Trainee earlier this year and completed his SVQ in IT and Telecommunications in just 8 months.



Ambitious

The **Team of the Year** went to the Fleet Hire and Travel Desk team who last year the dealt with over 6,000 travel requests and have consistently demonstrated success at implementing change and delivering service improvements.

During the Award Ceremony, the following category winners were announced.

- **Delivering on Localism and Making the Highlands an Even Better Place to Live** went to Just Ask Enquiry Line - a dedicated multi- professional phone enquiry line for children, young people, parents, carers and those who work with them.
- **Supporting People to Learn and Thrive** went to Macdiarmid Primary and Nursery - In raising deaf awareness, the school has created a passion for sign language and is providing a quality learning environment for everyone, including the wider community.
- **Making Highland a Welcoming Place where People Succeed in Life and Business** – went to Dingwall Service



Point and Relocation - The team behind the project have delivered efficient use of space and resources, strengthened partnership working and improved accessibility to Council services.

- **Delivering Efficiency, Earning Income and Improving Services** went to the Placement Services Change Programme – This is a project focussing on returning young people to the Highlands from costly out of the area placements. In the last year, 40 children have returned or been able to remain in the area, avoiding costs of over £6 million.

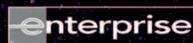
The **Convener's Award** went to the Reducing Staff Travel project which has achieved £400,000 of savings last year and is on track to deliver a further £175,000 of savings to the Council this year.



The **2019 Outstanding Partnership Award** went to a joint project between the Child Protection Committee and the University of the Highlands and Islands which saw Visual Communication and Design Degree students develop material for Child Sexual Exploitation campaigns to target young people across the Highlands.

New to the Council's Quality Awards this year were two Awards sponsored by the Chief Executive Donna Manson. She presented the **Staff Kindness and Care to Colleagues Award** to Sharon Bailey a Business Support Officer with the Care and Learning Service. The second new Award, **Kindness and Care to the Public** went to the Corran Ferry team who operate the most reliable and busiest single vessel route in Scotland, carrying over 250,000 cars each year. The crew provide a year-round regular service 7 days a week and go above and beyond to support the communities relying on the service. They all display lots of goodwill and do whatever it takes to keep the service running.

This year our Awards have been sponsored by



Message from the Chief

Dear Colleagues,

During my recent visits to Lochaber, Sutherland and Skye, I have been fortunate to meet a great many dedicated staff, working hard to do their very best for services in their areas.

Our Quality Awards are a great opportunity to recognise all the excellent work going on and celebrate these successes. It has been a real privilege to come together to share so many great examples of projects going on, right across the Highlands, that really are making a difference. There is a lot of 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. As the Chief Executive, I am very proud of all our staff and your hard work and commitment.

We have 1,000 staff working on the General Election across Highland, in polling stations and involved in the count on the night. Thanks to everyone involved in this important democratic process.

I am very pleased we have been able to report, just this week, that our budget is much closer to coming in on balance for this year, which is a remarkable effort on the part of many of you. Our budget strategy will continue to protect jobs and develop a stable and flexible workforce.

Kind regards,

Donna Manson Chief Executive

Christmas Pay Timetable

Payroll Christmas and New Year timetable can be downloaded here: www.bit.ly/XmasPayTimetable

Please also see amended Creditors payment schedule as per Creditors schedule: www.bit.ly/CreditorsPaymentSchedule

Payroll (first two digits of your payroll number)		
32 - Admin 39 - Valuation 65 - Child Services 72 - High Life Highland 42 - Admin	38 - Teachers	New Year Changes to 53 - Mid Monthly
Pay Date		
23rd Dec 2019	23rd Dec 2019	14th Jan 2020
Cut off date for Paper Expenses claims		
29 th Nov 2019	28 th Nov 2019	19 th Dec 2019
Cut off date for Online Expenses claims		
6 th Dec 2019	5 th Dec 2019	19 th Dec 2019
Cut off date for all Data Entry claims, CSVs etc		
2 nd Dec 2019	6 th Dec 2019	20 th Dec 2019
Payslips available online		
16 th Dec 2019	16 th Dec 2019	9 th Jan 2020

Payroll - Pension
34 - Pension
Pay Date
23rd Dec 2019
Payslips available online
16 th Dec 2019

Payroll - Elections	
75 - Elections (for the By-Election)	75 - Elections (for the General Election)
Pay Date	
9th Dec 2019	17th Jan 2020
Cut off date for claims	
21 st Nov 2019	19 th Dec 2019
Payslips available online	
2 nd Dec 2019	13 th Jan 2020



Council festive arrangements update

With the festive period fast approaching, it's important to remember that the Council will be turning down heating at most of its sites from 5pm on 24th December to help save money and reduce carbon emissions.

Over the course of 2019/20, the Council has to save £500,000 from its spend on energy, and is also working to significantly reduce its environmental impact following the declaration of a climate and ecological emergency in May 2019.

To these ends, work is well underway to ensure that all non-essential sites have heating turned down or are closed over the festive period.

The majority of Council buildings will have their heating set to the frost protection setting from **5pm on 24th December**;

and then be fully operational again from **Monday morning on 6th January**.

Staff who are required to work over the festive period will have the ability to hot-desk in other buildings if their main base is affected, and will also be able to access paper files from their main base where necessary.

The provisional list of Council offices that will be open and heated between **8am-5pm** over the festive closure period includes:

- 4 Castle Wynd (Inverness)
- Dingwall County Buildings
- Tigh Na Sgìre (Skye)
- Caithness House (Wick)
- Osprey House (Alness)
- Charles Kennedy Building (Fort William)

The staff survey to identify which staff are planning to work over the festive period has now closed, and many thanks to those of you who have completed this. Colleagues will be in touch with you and your line manager shortly to discuss your requirements and to ensure that you will be able to work over the days where your main office is not fully operational.

These dates are as follows:

- Friday 27th December
- Monday 30th December
- Tuesday 31st December
- Friday 3rd January

If you did not complete the survey before it closed but are planning on working over the festive period, please discuss this with your line manager as soon as possible.

Opening times for Customer Services including Service Points will shortly be finalised.

It is important to recognise that these steps are being taken to ensure the Council can continue to provide services over the festive period, whilst at the same time realise cost and carbon savings to help meet budget and statutory climate change pressures. We very much hope that staff will recognise the importance of this, and will work with us to ensure that the process is as seamless as possible.

More information is available on the staff intranet, and this will continue to be updated over the coming weeks:

www.bit.ly/FestiveClosure





www.shoeboxappeal.org

Best foot forward for Ardnamurchan Shoe Boxes

Pupils in Strontian are hoping to make other people's Christmas a little better this year by taking part in the Blythswood Care Shoe Box Appeal volunteering items to be sent around the world to people less fortunate than themselves.

Taking part were the S1-3 at Ardnamurchan High School, overseen by teacher Mrs Deborah White as part of the Religious and Moral Education lessons. In Strontian Primary, the Pupil Council took charge of the project, with a little help and guidance from Mrs Rachel Patterson.

Items included in the shoe boxes covered such things as toiletries, toothbrushes and toothpaste, soap; hats, scarves and gloves as well as small toys and sweets.

The pupils were asked to decide whether they were sending their shoe boxes to a man or a woman or child and this then altered the sorts of items they should contain.

Blythswood Care, a Highland Christian charity founded in 1966, has been running various aid packages to help with poverty and disaster relief all over the globe. Last year's shoe box appeal produced over 100,000 boxes and these were distributed to countries as far afield as Albania, Kosovo, Moldova, Serbia and the Ukraine.

Pictured are Jean Campbell, Blythswood Care; Debbie White, Ardnamurchan High School; Pupils Megan MacDonald and Isabella Sutherland

Congratulations to Stuart Black on his new role with HIE

Stuart Black,
Executive Chief Officer
for Economy and Transformation, has been
congratulated on his new role in the Highlands.
He will be leaving in January 2020 to take up a post
with Highlands and Island Enterprise (HIE), after
12 years' service with The Highland Council.

Stuart joined the Council in 2008 as Director of Planning and
Development. He says:

"I have enjoyed my time with The Highland
Council, having worked with great people
and been involved in many high-profile and
award winning projects. It is now time for a
change and I look forward to my new role as
Area Manager in Moray focusing on economic
development which has been the main driver
of my career."

The Leader of the Council Margaret Davidson
and Chief Executive Donna Manson wish Stuart
all the very best in his new role.



2019 Christmas Charity Raffle

As you will be aware, we have been working
hard to re-establish the Christmas Charity
Raffle in aid of the Highland Hospice and it is
now ready to be launched.

Full details can be found online for the raffle prizes and
how to get your tickets. Please share this information with
any members of staff who don't have access to email or
intranet.

All tickets must be received by 12pm on **Monday 16th
December 2019** and the draw will take place on Thursday
19th December at 12pm at Council Headquarters,
Inverness with winners being announced shortly
thereafter.

Thank you for supporting this extremely worthy cause!

Lorna Bailey, Alison Gilbert and Rosemary MacRae

www.bit.ly/XmasRaffle2019

Delivery Law UK



Shopping online is at the heart of any modern economy, but is of particular importance to buyers in rural areas such as the Highlands, where there is not always easy access to “high street” shops.

Internet delivery surcharging is one of the most common topics of complaints received by The Highland Council’s Trading Standards team. After much incremental 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

These objectives include: gaining full support from policy-makers; more action by other Trading Standards services and other regulators; improving consumer knowledge and self-help; improving business knowledge and compliance. The design and content of the site promote Highland views on the issues, within the context of a credible national platform for all of the UK. It has been highly praised by Government and other stakeholders and widely used by consumers, businesses and policy-makers. This project delivers Trading Standards’ role to protect consumers and assist reputable

businesses on a key topic for the Highlands, by using new ways of working enabled by new technology to deliver a highly effective national approach.

This page of the website has promotional videos explaining the site and the project:

www.deliverylaw.uk/about



Want to buy yourself some time?



Check out the HolidayFlex offer for Highland Council employees on your employee benefits platform at www.highlandcouncil.widerwallet.com

Use Employer Access Code: S612612H

Helpline: 0800 612 7422



The next HolidayFlex window is:
14th November to 14th December



Solar PV Rollout



The Commercial and Efficiency Team, in conjunction with the Energy & Sustainability Team, have made good progress on the Solar PV project.

Several sites currently have works underway, with a further 22 sites programmed in for works, and both Invergordon (comprising of the Academy and Leisure Centre) and Milton of Leys are complete and operational.

This self-financing project is part of the Council's £2.3m investment in solar technology across the non-domestic estate to combat energy price increases, reduce energy spend and reduce carbon emissions. This renewable technology, which has a minimum lifespan of 25 years, will offset the electricity required to operate these buildings and will see an estimated annual carbon saving of ~28,000kg of CO₂ equivalent.

This also forms part of the Council's £7m Salix Recycling Fund – an interest-free loan to the Council for energy efficiency projects. The Council utilised Salix's Recycling Fund (RF) - a ring-fenced pot of money held by the local authority, which is created with capital provided by Scottish Government through Salix, and equally matched by the local authority. The Highland Council currently operate the largest Recycling Fund in Scotland.



