

Staff Connections Ceanglaichean Luchd-obrach



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THANK YOU!

MFR have been busy wrapping and packing gifts into stockings before sending them out to disadvantaged children. MFR Cash For Kids Mission Christmas campaign has managed to reach the 5,000 gift mark, which was its original goal.

**Every child we support will receive
£50 of gifts on Christmas morning.**

On behalf of everyone here at MFR Cash for Kids we'd like to thank you for supporting our Mission Christmas appeal.

Every year we're touched by the generosity of our listeners. Without your support we wouldn't be able to give disadvantaged children in the Highlands, Moray and Aberdeenshire the Christmas they deserve.

For many of us Christmas is a time of joy but for the families we support it can be a time they dread. Thanks to the generosity of people like you we're able to ensure that these children, living right here in our community, have a Christmas to remember.

We can't thank you enough for getting behind our appeal and helping us to bring smiles to the faces of hundreds of local children this Christmas.



Darren Reid and Liam Gallagher, Assistant Civic Officers

Merry Christmas!

www.mfr.co.uk/mission #MissionChristmas

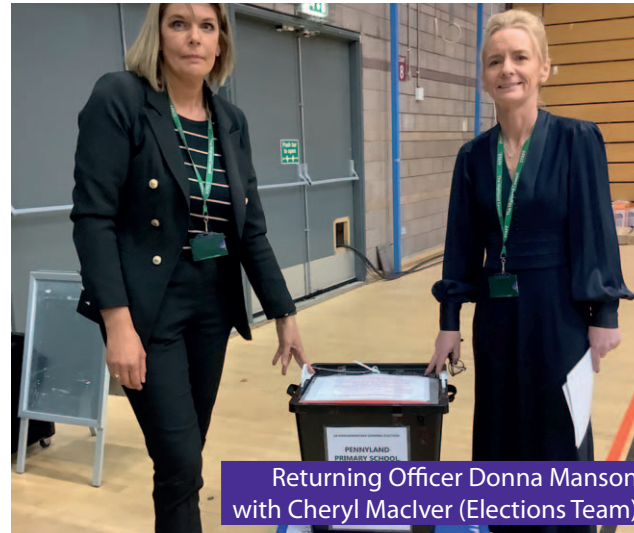


Ambitious

Sustainable

Connected

General Election Count



A delighted Colin MacKenzie, Highland Council's Insurance Officer was the first Polling Station Presiding Officer to return their box to the count centre at Inverness Leisure on the night of the UK Parliamentary general election. Colin was Presiding Officer for the Dochgarroch Primary School Polling station. Over 1000 staff across the Council area involved in delivering the election.



Message from the Chief Executive

Dear Colleagues,

Over the next few weeks as we all have a break from work I hope you have the opportunity to relax ; spend some quality time with the people you love and care for and make happy memories.

It is important that we reflect on the year that has gone, both personally and professionally and plan for the future that lies ahead.

I personally find it a privilege and honour to work for and lead The Highland Council. I have met so many inspirational colleagues and I am sincerely thankful for the outstanding job that you do on a daily basis.

It has been a challenging but exciting 2019: we are doing a much better job with our budget and are now very much focused on improving our performance. However, as we move forward into 2020 my aim is for us to become a much more 'connected Council' with a focus on what works locally through listening and learning and engaging with each other and with our communities.

My professional motto is that 'every day is a learning day' and I will be very much focussed in 2020 on developing the culture and leadership within our Council so that all of our staff feel valued and respected for the great job that they do for the people of the Highlands.

On a more personal note 'HOPE' is what drives me every day: hope for greater peace; hope for greater respect amongst people; hope for understanding and tolerance of difference and diversity. I do hope that all staff have a wonderful festive break with those they love and care for:



"HOPE" is the thing with feathers –

That perches in the soul –

And sings the tune without the words –

And never stops at all.

Have a wonderful holiday and I look forward to working with you in 2020.

Kind regards,

Donna Manson **Chief Executive**

Committees Structure 2019/20



New Council Structure

Chief Executive
Donna Manson

Each ECO will have responsibility for a geographical area.



Equally safe at work

The Highland Council has been working closely with trade union colleagues and Close the Gap to create a zero-tolerance culture towards gender-based violence, through policy development, training and communication.

Throughout the past year the Council has been progressing an action plan, which is designed to deliver against the six standards of the Equally Safe at Work (ESAW) accreditation programme.

Gender-based violence affects all aspects of women's lives, including employment and the Council is committed to supporting women so they can stay in work and access the services they need. One of the key aspects is leadership, which plays a crucial role in creating and sustaining a change-oriented organisational culture.

Lesley Weber, Executive Chief Officer for Health and Social Care, says:

"Having the genuine support of leaders in advancing gender equality and creating this zero-tolerance culture will send a powerful message to the workforce that this work is very much a priority. It is essential that we demonstrate commitment to, and invest in, the Equally Safe at Work programme, if it is our policy to support outcomes."

It is statistically likely that within our places of employment there will be colleagues / employees who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse or other forms of gender based violence. As set out in the Equally Safe at Work paper this afternoon, The Highland Council are committed to addressing and tackling gender based violence through policy, training, communication and enabling an effective reporting mechanism. The Highland Council is committed to working towards the accreditation of Equally Safe at Work, and through strong leadership will promote both the principles, and commit to sustained organisational culture change.

If you, or an employee, or one of your constituents are affected by domestic abuse or any other form of gender based violence, support is available through a range of support services across the Highlands.

For further details please visit:

www.bit.ly/SupportServicesForWomen

If you are someone you know are in immediate danger please phone the police on **999**.

Below are details of local Women's Aid and Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland:

Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid

Monday-Friday 9am-5pm

0345 508 0151

info@caswa.org.uk

Caithness & Sutherland Women's Aid offer follow-on and outreach services for women and children who have experience of domestic abuse and other forms of gender based violence. They also offer telephone support and a drop-in service. The children and young people's workers offer support via email and text.

Inverness Women's Aid

01463 220719

info@invernesswa.co.uk

Inverness Women's Aid provide confidential support to women, children and young people who have experienced or are experiencing domestic abuse in the Inverness, Badenoch, Strathspey & Nairn areas. Support is provided by phone; email; or face to face.

Lochaber Women's Aid

01397 705734

lwa@lochaberwomensaid.org

Lochaber Women's Aid provides confidential information and support to women, young people or children, who are or have been affected by domestic abuse.

Ross-Shire Women's Aid

01349 863568 (Dingwall)

01478 613365 (Skye)

info@rosswa@co.uk

Ross-Shire Women's Aid support and protect women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse through one to one support by phone, text or in person, group support, information, advocacy.

Rape and Sexual Abuse Service Highland (RASASH)

www.rasash.org.uk

RASASH provides free, confidential emotional support, information and advocacy for survivors of sexual violence and abuse for those aged 13+. RASASH also provides support for non-abusing partners, family and friends of survivors.

The confidential local rate support line is available: **03330 066 909**

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays 9.30am-1pm,

Tuesdays and Thursdays 1pm-4pm.

If you leave a message outwith these hours, RASASH will respond as soon as they can.

You can also email RASASH on: **support@rasash.org.uk**

If you need support during evenings or weekends, please contact:

Rape Crisis Scotland Helpline on: **08088 010302**

6pm-Midnight daily.

National Domestic Abuse and Forced Marriage Helpline Scotland 24 Hour Helpline 0800 027 1234. A Helpline for all individuals affected by domestic abuse and/or forced marriage.

WELLBEING WORKSHOP

All staff are invited to attend an engaging and interactive workshop to support holistic health and wellbeing

The wellbeing of all our staff is central to the success of our organisation - particularly at this time of significant change. To support our commitment to promoting the health and wellbeing of employees, Learning and Development invite all staff to attend a wellbeing workshop.

During the session, you will be introduced to practical techniques that will help you put into place small achievable lifestyle changes that can positively impact your personal, physical and mental wellbeing. You will also have an opportunity to connect with colleagues in a supportive environment.

This two-hour workshop is free to attend. Although it is voluntary, colleagues are strongly encouraged to take up this opportunity. Managers, please facilitate the attendance of any staff that wish to participate. Sessions will be delivered in locations across Highland. Please visit our website for more details.

To book your place, visit the Learning and Development portal via www.highland.gov.uk & SEARCH: **Wellbeing Workshop** or PHONE: 01463 644024 EMAIL: learning.development@highland.gov.uk



Your Wellbeing Matters



What Staff Are Saying:

"I thought the training was comprehensive. It was interactive and thought provoking."

"Thoroughly enjoyable! I felt a little down when I arrived but I left feeling on a high. Happy activities and well thought out. I learnt a lot."

"I really enjoyed the session today and feel so much better within myself."

"I loved the workshop. It made me realise there were things I wanted to work on. Sometimes life goes by so quickly that you can't think and take 'me time' but I've made some changes since and I'm feeling much better. It was definitely an eye opener to me and I'm so glad I went!"

"I was apprehensive about coming along to the workshop but I really enjoyed the two hours."

Living Wage Accreditation for Highland Council

The largest employer in the Highlands, has achieved Living Wage accreditation.

The Highland Council which employs just over 10,270 staff across the Highland area also applies the living wage rate to apprentices. The accreditation means there is an ongoing commitment to encourage contractors to pay their workers the living wage rate too.

The accreditation will provide social and economic benefits to workers in the Highlands where wages in remote and rural areas in particular are below the equivalent of the national living wage.



Chair of Resources Committee, Alister MacKinnon commented :

"Paying Council staff the living wage contributes to achieving a sustainable economy and supports staff wellbeing. We are working with our Community Planning Partners to address inequalities in our communities and collaboratively driving economic growth to ensure the Highlands is the place to live, thrive and prosper."

Council unions GMB, Unison, Unite/UCATT and EIS, have provided the following joint statement:

"We are pleased The Highland Council are recognised as a Living Wage employer. Increasing the wages of the lowest paid employees and reducing the level of in-work poverty is a key priority for our unions. We commend the Council for also paying its apprentices the Living Wage rate, which goes beyond the requirement of a Living Wage employer."

Peter Kelly, Director of the Poverty Alliance said:

"We are delighted that The Highland Council have become an accredited Living Wage employer. They join a movement of over 1600 Scottish employers who choose to go beyond the legal minimum and ensure that all their staff receive a rate of pay that is based on the

cost of living.

The announcement comes during Living Wage Week, which is the annual celebration of the Living Wage movement in the UK. During this week, Living Wage Scotland and accredited employers host a series of regional events, focused around the theme of Living Wage.

The real Living Wage is one of the most important tools at our disposal to help make an impact on levels of in-work poverty in Scotland and we congratulate The Highland Council on becoming an accredited employer."

Jack Evans, Living Wage Scotland Manager said:

"Congratulations to The Highland Council on becoming a Living Wage accredited employer. Their accreditation is a signal of their commitment to tackle low pay and in-work poverty.

Local Authorities are key employers in their local area. They are not only large employers with significant spending power, but also act as an example to other employers in the area. We hope, after today's announcement, more are encouraged to become accredited and ensure that both directly employed and contracted staff are paid the real Living Wage."

Support for survivors of domestic abuse at Christmas

Many of us see the festive period as a chance to spend quality time with our families and friends. But for some Highland Council employees who may be survivors of domestic violence and abuse, it is an incredibly difficult time of year.

Often when people think of domestic abuse they think of physical violence, but domestic abuse is very often so much more than that. Domestic abuse is a pattern of controlling, coercive, threatening, degrading and/or violent behaviour, including sexual violence, by a partner or ex-partner. Domestic abuse is overwhelmingly experienced by women and perpetrated by men. It doesn't matter how old someone is, what their background or their job is, or whether they have children – anyone can be a victim of abuse.

The effects of domestic abuse are significant, and multifaceted, and therefore affect productivity, absenteeism and job retention. Survivors of domestic abuse report experiencing trauma, stress and other mental health

problems, which affects their work performance due to being distracted, tired or unwell. It can also cause financial instability or loss of employment because of unexplained absences or moving to a new house or job to avoid perpetrators.

I would ask you to take a few minutes to watch this short video clip which illustrates the impact of domestic abuse and its effect on employees:

www.bit.ly/DigitalStoriesItsOurBusiness

It is important that we take measures to support our employees. You will find our current guidance on the link below. HR Officers are also available to provide specific advice on individual cases.

www.bit.ly/HighlandGenderBasedViolence

Anyone affected by domestic abuse should call 999 in an emergency or call the National Domestic Abuse helpline on 0800 027 1234 or visit: www.womensaid.org.uk. You can also find contact details of support in the local Support Services directory:

www.bit.ly/SupportServicesForWomen

Thank you,

Elaine Barrie, Head of Human Resources

Festive Safe

Our Trading Standards enforcement staff took part in the 'Festive Safe' event at the Eastgate Shopping Centre on Wednesday 4th Dec.

The theme was "Spot the Fake". They had seven genuine and fake items. The goods comprised of a mixture of clothes, candles, car parts, headphones and a board game. They ran a competition to see if the public could tell which items were genuine. The competition winner was Danielle Burton who won a Tesco's shopping voucher.



Highland Welcomes 18 New Teachers

Following the successful completion of the Rural Learn to Teach programme, eighteen new probationer teachers celebrated their achievement at a civic reception, hosted by The Highland Council, in Inverness on Saturday 30th November.

Rural Learn to Teach programme is an innovative route into primary teaching. It is funded by the Scottish Government, delivered in partnership by University of Dundee and the University of Highlands and Islands, and is fully supported by The Highland Council.

This is the first cohort to complete the programme, which allows students to continue in their full time employment whilst engaging in their studies.

The Highland Council praised the initiative and welcomed the new teachers into the profession.

Sincere congratulations to all

We welcome our new Highland colleagues into the teaching profession and wish them all the best in their chosen careers.

To find out more about the next intake, visit the website below for programme details, structure and content.

Photo from left to right:

Mary Knight, Senior Lecturer and Associate Dean of Learning & Teaching, University of Dundee, Jill Shimi, Project Lead, RLTT, University of Dundee, Aileen Mackay, Strategic Quality Improvement Officer, Highland Council, Anna Marshall, Sarah McNair, Cara MacCallum, Ida Bartkiewicz, Shirley Young, Amanda Gibbon, Beth Henderson, Mhairi Cameron, Zoe Livings, Erin Wilmot, Rebecca Walters, Shira Drain, Gavin MacMillan, Heather McLauchlan, Carla Gallon, Fiona MacDonald, Heather Dibble, Christine Stokes, Mark Lindley-Highfield, Group Lead, RLTT, University of Dundee and UHI, Nicky Grant Interim Head of Education, Highland Council and joined by Depute Provost Bet McAllister.

www.iwanttoteachinScottishHighlands.com/ltt-2/rural-ltt-presentation

