

# Staff Connections Ceanglaichean Luchd-obrach



Staff Bulletin | October 2021 | Issue 45

## Sustainability in the Small Isles and Knoydart



Ambitious

Sustainable

Connected



# Sustainability in the Small Isles and Knoydart

Chief Executive Donna Manson and some of the senior team visited the Small Isles (of Muck, Rum and Eigg) and Inverie in September to meet with Highland Council staff and local West coast communities.

The visit to the West coast highlighted the sustainability of small communities, the innovation in hydro power and food growing, as well as the issues of housing and transport.

Knoydart is a hydro powered community with a focus on outdoor learning and growing food in schools.

Eigg strives for a circular economy with a visitor centre and their own woodland powered energy plant.

Muck is looking at reusing land and repurposing for much needed housing; and all children on the island cycle to school.

The visit is ahead of a major focus for the Council on transition to net zero, with the climate change conference later in October, COP26 next month and building on plans to develop Highland as a green energy hub.

[www.bit.ly/HighlandCCC2021](http://www.bit.ly/HighlandCCC2021)



Heading out to see staff and communities in the Small Isles



Meeting with communities on Muck



Innovation for a circular economy on Eigg



Sustainable communities ensuring the power network runs in Knoydart



Listening to housing issues in Muck



Children in Knoydart growing their own vegetables



Children cycle to school on Muck



Listening to staff



Checking in on waste and recycling solutions on Eigg

# Message from the Chief Executive

Dear Colleagues

We have been continuing our senior management 'placebased' visits to local communities, starting with a visit to the Small Isles and Knoydart in the last week of September.

These visits were started prior to the pandemic and we will be getting out again and connecting with local people in their own areas.

In order to be an ambitious, sustainable and connected Council, we are adopting a place-based approach of listening to our staff and listening to people within their own communities.

This visit to the Small Isles and Inverie is one in a series of thematic trips to local communities. We are hoping to carry out more visits across the Highlands after the October school holidays.

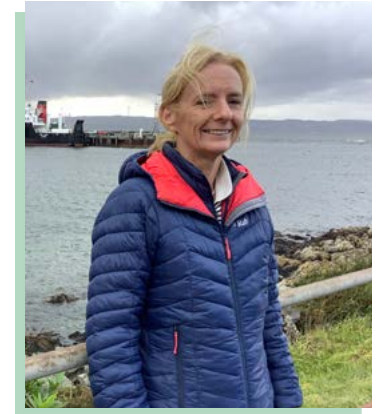
Some of our Executive Chief Officers attended to hear first-hand of any local service issues. It's important that our staff and communities - no matter where they live – have direct access to speak to the Council's senior managers and to have their voice heard.

This will form part of our staff engagement, together with the online forums and chats we have been having in recent months.

It is always a joy to come out and visit staff locally. I want to thank you all for your continued support and dedication throughout what has been a very difficult couple of years. Now that the majority of people have been vaccinated, we are less in need of so many restrictions and I look forward to once again getting out to meet staff based and working all over the Highlands.

Take care and keep safe,

Donna Manson, **Chief Executive**



# Personal development of staff praised

At the start of the recent Housing and Property Committee, members congratulated two members of staff on their success in gaining new skills and qualifications which are bringing benefits to the service.



Kirsty Maclean initially joined the Service in an administration role and was very keen to develop new skills. She secured a Project Coordinator post in the Project Management Team and, with a strong commitment to her role, is developing her Project Management Skills.

She initially spent two years completing an HNC in Quantity Surveying and was then enrolled in the Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen through the Graduate Apprenticeship scheme and has spent the last 2 years completing a BSc in Construction and the Built Environment alongside working full time.

By working closely with her line manager and mentor, Kirsty was given excellent support to ensure that her workload complemented what she was studying, to give her the best possible experience whilst completing her course.

Kirsty considers herself very fortunate to have been given the opportunity to do a graduate apprentice course and would recommend it to anyone wanting to progress their career. She said:

“The subjects taught as part of my course cover a broad range including project management, construction law, construction technology, and business finance and it has been great to apply what I have learnt to my job. It has certainly helped me to better understand construction processes and apply problem solving to tackle issues that arise when managing construction projects.”



Trainee Quantity Surveyor Lynn Fraser also has shown a strong commitment to her personal development. She has spent the last 4 and a half years completing a distance learning

BSc (Hons) in Quantity Surveying at the University College of Estate Management, which is based in Reading.

When asked about the challenges and work put in to achieve the results Lynn said:

“I found delving back into education initially challenging, however I had a lot of support from both the University and The Highland Council. The whole of the Quantity Surveying team especially played a large part in my academic success and continuous growth in my job role.

“The study route The Highland Council were able to offer me was greatly beneficial to my learning. I can say from experience that to be able to work within the job role whilst studying is truly invaluable.”





### Lynn added:

“The completion of my degree and development in my role over the last 4 and a half years has given me great confidence, not only in the workplace but in aspects of my personal life too. I feel extremely grateful to have been given this opportunity – this is reflected in my achievements to date – and I am proud to have completed this journey.”

“If I had to describe my experience in a few short words, I would say – transformational, empowering, and extremely rewarding.”

Both ladies’ skills will be in demand as for several years there has been a shortage of quantity surveyors – a legacy from global recession in 2009 which saw fewer students entering construction related courses and a subsequent boom in oil and gas where high salaries attracted many Quantity Surveyors.

Speaking on behalf of all members of the Committee, Chair Cllr Ben Thompson congratulated Kirsty and Lynn. He said:

“Congratulations to both Kirsty and Lynn, they have both worked incredibly hard to gain their qualifications while both fulfilling their daily role. They are both amazing examples of how employees can develop themselves. They are real assets to the team and the Property service will greatly benefit from their ongoing professional development.

“Recruitment has been difficult over the last few years, particularly competing with the private sector for staff. We are very committed to doing all we can to support and grow our own talent. I hope hearing about the success in gaining new qualifications and skills Kirsty and Lynn have had while working for our service encourages more young people to consider starting their careers with the Council.”

**There are a wide range of Modern & Graduate Apprenticeship opportunities. Managers would like to know more about apprentice opportunities for their teams, please contact the email below.**

Employees wishing to know more about upskilling opportunities, please contact: [THCMA@highland.gov.uk](mailto:THCMA@highland.gov.uk)

# ICT Transition Programme Update

Members of the Corporate Resources Committee held on 25<sup>th</sup> August 2021, were provided with an update on the transition of The Highland Council's outsourced ICT delivery arrangements to a new in-house provision.

This complex programme will see ICT services currently provided by Wipro transfer to the Council to a new in-house team on a phased basis starting in October 2021 and completing by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.

The new in-house provision is expected to bring greater benefits in terms of value for money, quality of service and flexibility to meeting changing business demands. It will also enable the Council to move forward the use of technology to modernise and transform the way Council services are delivered and support the medium-term financial planning of the Council.

Later this year, will see the first services transition of service from Wipro, which will involve the Field Engineering teams and Service Desk staff transferring to the Council.

The timetable for the ICT Transition Programme activities is as follows:

- Transfer of Field Engineering  
– 1<sup>st</sup> October 2021
- Transfer of Service Desk  
– 1<sup>st</sup> November 2021
- Transfer of remaining local Wipro staff  
– 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022
- End of Wipro contract (latest possible date)  
– 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024



Many of the current employees of Wipro and contract staff employed by Kelly Services who are transferring to the Council perform some of the most visible customer-facing roles on the Service Desk, Field Engineering and posts that provide critical support to infrastructure and systems behind the scenes.

Overall, it is expected the new in-house ICT team will increase from the current 49 FTE to 120-130 FTE protecting much needed skilled employment in the Highlands.

The report also outlined the close co-operation with the Digital Transformation Programme and the ambition of the new ICT team to provide the capability to deliver strategic change as part of the overall Programme.

Further updates on the progress of the ICT Transition Programme will be provided in future editions of Staff Connections and through regular Teams briefings through the ICT Change Network.

# Cyber Resilience Exercise

Senior managers recently joined together with Communications & Resilience and ICT colleagues for an all-day exercise to explore our resilience to a cyber-attack. We considered recent case studies from other local authorities and public sector bodies who have experienced devastating incidents in recent months.

We reflected on the critical functions that The Highland Council need to be able to deliver for our citizens and our statutory duties, and how they could be impacted by a prolonged outage to our ICT systems in the event of a cyber-attack. In the afternoon, the Scottish Business Resilience Centre walked us through a scenario, asking us to consider how we would react to a situation where a key supplier had been victim to a major cyber incident. We were also asked to consider whether our supplier contracts were robust regarding obligations in the event of such an event.

Through our discussions we concluded that the potential impacts and recovery from a major cyber-attack would have a significant cost to the council. Full recovery could take months or even years and that exercising our business continuity plans is a critical activity. Services are now being asked to stress test their business continuity plans in the event of a major cyber security event. ICT Services and Communications & Resilience colleagues are offering to work with Services to develop exercises which will give us confidence that our business continuity plans are fit for purpose.

## TIME IT TAKES A HACKER TO BRUTE FORCE YOUR PASSWORD

Number of Characters	Numbers Only	Lowercase Letters	Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters	Numbers, Upper and Lowercase Letters, Symbols
4	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
5	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly
6	Instantly	Instantly	Instantly	1 sec	5 secs
7	Instantly	Instantly	25 secs	1 min	6 mins
8	Instantly	5 secs	22 mins	1 hour	8 hours
9	Instantly	2 mins	19 hours	3 days	3 weeks
10	Instantly	58 mins	1 month	7 months	5 years
11	2 secs	1 day	5 years	41 years	400 years
12	25 secs	3 weeks	300 years	2k years	34k years
13	4 mins	1 year	16k years	100k years	2m years
14	41 mins	51 years	800k years	9m years	200m years
15	6 hours	1k years	43m years	600m years	15 bn years
16	2 days	34k years	2bn years	37bn years	1tn years
17	4 weeks	800k years	100bn years	2tn years	93tn years
18	9 months	23m years	6tn years	100 tn years	7qd years



-Data sourced from [HowSecureisMyPassword.net](https://www.howsecureismypassword.net)

**Did you know simple and short passwords can be cracked in minutes by bad actors using modern computer power available at low cost to anyone?**

Try the National Cyber Security Centre training course - Top Tips for staff:

[www.bit.ly/TopTipsForStaff](https://www.bit.ly/TopTipsForStaff)



# Cyber Security information for small businesses

It is important to protect your business against Cybercrime.

The National Cyber Security Centre's Cyber Security Guide for Small Businesses

provides important, practical, affordable information on how to improve your business cyber security. Find out more and download your copy at:

[www.ncsc.gov.uk/files/NCSC\\_A5\\_Small\\_Business\\_Guide\\_v4\\_OCT20.pdf](http://www.ncsc.gov.uk/files/NCSC_A5_Small_Business_Guide_v4_OCT20.pdf)

#keepingpeoplesafe

#takefive



# Internet Explorer has been discontinued

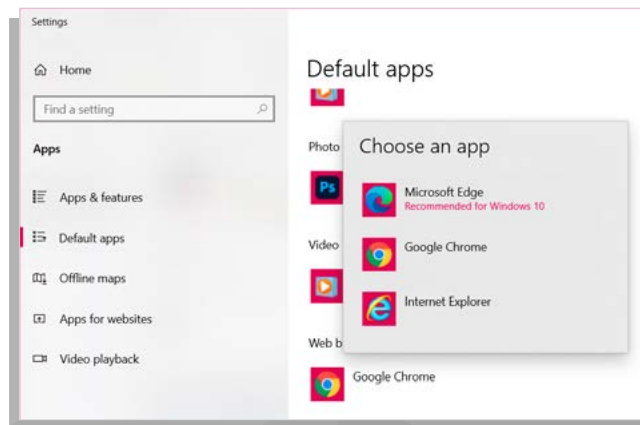
## Having problems opening links on the internet from your Council computer?

Try Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge.

Internet Explorer has been discontinued by Microsoft, so should only be used for legacy access to systems that need it.

You can change the default browser on work computers as follows:

- Type 'Default apps' in the search bar at the bottom left of your screen where it says 'Type here to search';
- In the screen that comes up, scroll down to the heading Web browser;



- Click on the app name under the Web browser heading and another box will pop-up showing you other apps you can select;

- Select Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge in the drop down selection, by clicking once;

- Then to test it, click on a link in one of your emails, and it will launch in your new default browser.

If there is still an error message, you will need to raise a support call with Wipro through the online portal or by phoning **01463 253150**.



# New Ways of Working - Phased return to “hybrid” office working

Many staff who have been working at home for some 18 months have begun a phased return to offices since the move to beyond Level Zero. This is in the form of a “hybrid” model for the majority, working some time from home and some time from the office.

Some protective measures are staying in place for now, including the use of face coverings in communal areas, good hygiene and the collection of contact details as part of Test and Protect.

The commitment to a hybrid model is in line with Scottish Government recommendations. This blended way of working will help to achieve savings and carbon reduction targets, and renew our connections with our colleagues, as well as building on the new ways of working which have been developed over the past year.

Line managers have been working with their teams to identify and prioritise staff returning, based on business need and taking into account wellbeing and safety.

The focus now is on adjustment and for staff to take stock of the workspaces they previously occupied.

We will all need to work differently and as time moves on, there will be fewer office buildings as we reduce our estate footprint. The hybrid model will require a clear desk policy with more flexibility and moving to shared spaces in line with the new ways of working project. Everyone will be required to review any workspace items and personal effects and keep desks clean and clear to enable this new model to work.

It will be everyone’s individual responsibility to clean your desk and equipment before and after use. Be considerate of others, and although there is no requirement to be physically distanced, allow space and maximise ventilation where possible. Face coverings will remain mandatory for communal areas such as kitchens, toilets and corridors for the time being.

As part of the New Ways of Working project, funding has been made available for ICT investment and this will be prioritised on replacement of most desktops with laptops and related equipment over the coming months, to allow a hybrid and flexible model of working.

We have published a collection of the questions and answers raised and captured during the recent Staff Engagement Sessions:

[www.bit.ly/NWoW-QandAs](http://www.bit.ly/NWoW-QandAs)

Staff guidance and manager actions on returning to workplace have been developed and regular updates will be made as we move forward. All project information on New Ways of Working project can be found at these sites:

[www.bit.ly/ReturnToOffice-PracticalGuidance](http://www.bit.ly/ReturnToOffice-PracticalGuidance)

[www.bit.ly/TeamRecoveryPlan](http://www.bit.ly/TeamRecoveryPlan)

[www.bit.ly/HC-NewWaysofWorking](http://www.bit.ly/HC-NewWaysofWorking)

Links to national guidance can be found at:

[www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus](http://www.highland.gov.uk/coronavirus)

Managers are reminded that the project drop in sessions are held every second Tuesday at 4pm. If you haven’t received an invite to these sessions please contact:

[Jennifer.Greenshields@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Jennifer.Greenshields@highland.gov.uk)

# Digital Transformation Staff Survey

We are the Digital Transformation project team and we want to hear from you. The Digital Transformation Staff Survey is now live until 21<sup>st</sup> October.

- You will receive the link below by email;
- or you can visit:  
[www.bit.ly/StaffDigitalTransformationSurvey](http://www.bit.ly/StaffDigitalTransformationSurvey)
- or scan our survey QR code:



The survey is anonymous and only takes around 15 minutes, out of your working day, to complete. We want to ask:

“Where are we all,  
when it comes to digital skills?”

We value your participation; whether you work in an office, from home, in a school, or out and about in our communities, we want to hear from you.

From the findings, we can tailor staff learning and development and make sure that we have resources in place for all staff. Providing the right training will empower Highland Council employees.

As an organisation we can move forward together, embracing the digital age.

Digitally transforming our services will improve connectivity and efficiency, for the benefit of Highland citizens.

Your responses will help us plan for the Highland Council’s digital future.

\*Please check your email information on MyView is up-to-date.\*





# World Suicide Prevention Day

## – Creating hope through action

World Suicide Prevention Day was recently observed on 10<sup>th</sup> September to provide commitment, action, and promote preventative measures with the aim of reducing the number of suicides and suicide attempts globally.

Suicide prevention is vital and through the delivery of the Highland Community Planning Partnership a Prevent Suicide Highland App and Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme (SIPP) training are available.

New official figures by the National Records of Scotland identified that 44 people died by probable suicide in the Highland council area in 2020.

The number of deaths remains above the previous five-year average and continues a recent upward trend.

For information on SIPP training or mental health support contact: [james.mcreath@highland.gov.uk](mailto:james.mcreath@highland.gov.uk)

or check our mental health and wellbeing links below:

Employee Assistance Programme:  
[www.bit.ly/Health-and-Safety-EAP](http://www.bit.ly/Health-and-Safety-EAP)

Mental health and wellbeing toolkit:  
[www.bit.ly/MHW-Toolkit](http://www.bit.ly/MHW-Toolkit)

Mental Health Representatives:  
[www.bit.ly/MH-Representatives](http://www.bit.ly/MH-Representatives)

# Clear Your Head Campaign



These are worrying and uncertain times. The coronavirus outbreak has changed daily life for us all in Scotland and has had a real impact on how many of us are feeling. It's ok to not feel yourself right now, and we have some great tips to help get you through it.

'Clear Your Head' highlights the practical things people can do to look after themselves whilst staying at home.

Find tips on how to stay positive and feel better at:  
[www.clearyourhead.scot](http://www.clearyourhead.scot)



# Support and Wellbeing Resources

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a confidential counselling service that provides support to Highland Council employees. It is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

Register online:

<https://app.spectrum.life/login#>

Organisation code: **j5n2Rh73**

The Mental Health & Wellbeing Toolkit is also available to all employees and line managers. Here, you will find resources to help you understand mental health and wellbeing, the importance of mental health at work, and a list of useful contacts and resources.

[www.bit.ly/MHW-Toolkit](http://www.bit.ly/MHW-Toolkit)

## World Mental Health Day

10<sup>th</sup> October 2021

Every year, the World comes together on 10<sup>th</sup> October for World Mental Health Day to promote positive mental health, raise awareness of mental health difficulties and to tackle stigma.

Chief Executive, Donna Manson said:

“Many of our Highland communities have been affected by mental health and suicide, the more we can do together to help each other the more we can save lives. Sometimes talking to a confidential service can help too and we have many supports in place for staff and their families.”

In Scotland around one in three people are estimated to be affected by mental health difficulties in any year.

‘5 ways to wellbeing’ are simple things you can do to look after your mental health each and every day:

[www.bit.ly/5Ways-to-Wellbeing](http://www.bit.ly/5Ways-to-Wellbeing)

Why not design and implement your own Wellbeing Action Plan as the “one thing” you might consider to give your wellbeing a boost:

[www.bit.ly/Guides-to-Wellbeing-Action-Plan](http://www.bit.ly/Guides-to-Wellbeing-Action-Plan)



# New probationer teachers get a warm Highland welcome

Highland's newest probationer teachers were warmly welcomed to the Highlands at an online Induction Event recently.

The probationer teachers' Induction Event is the first of a wide range of professional learning events which run across the year, to support the needs of beginning teachers and their ongoing professional learning.

The newly qualified teachers started working in schools across the Highlands on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> August 2021.

These beginning teachers will play a key role in supporting our children and young people as they return to schools and we know they will commit fully to building positive relationships with their learners, providing relevant, engaging and exciting learning experiences while at the same time supporting their mental health and wellbeing.

There are 91 Teacher Induction Scheme (TIS) probationers starting in August (2021) – 29 secondary and 62 primary. There are also a number of Flexible Route probationers starting in Term 1 and a number of these attended the Induction Event. There will be a number of student teachers on an extension placement (5) from August-October (which will allow them to have the required minimum number of placement weeks for their Initial Teacher Education Programme) who also joined our induction event – these students, on completion of a successful extension placement, will then continue with us as probationer teachers from October onwards.

Our 62 TIS primary probationers have been allocated to our educational areas as follows - 14 North, 15 Mid, 23 South and 10 West. The 29 TIS secondary probationers have been allocated to our educational areas as follows: 5 North, 6 Mid, 16 South and 2 West. Our 1 Flexible Route probationer who attended the Induction Event is located in the Mid.

The 29 TIS secondary school probationers will be working in the following subjects areas: Art and Design (4), Biology (2), Business Education (4); English (2), French (2); French/German (1); Geography (2), History/Modern Studies (2); Physical Education (5), Physics (1); Religious Education (1) and Technological Education (3).

We have 11 preference waivers in Secondary and 20 in Primary.

These probationers will be relocating to the Highlands from different parts of Scotland and The Highland Council wishes them all the very best as they integrate with their new community; build new friendships and enjoy all that is positive about living in the Highlands. All the other TIS probationers are 'locals' and will bring much to the learning experiences of children and young people in their known home context.

# Connected – Council to further engage with schools on capital plan investment

Communication and engagement activity has been taking place for 5 priority school projects including Beauly Primary, Culloden Academy, Dunvegan Primary, Park Primary, and St Clements School.

At a meeting of the Council on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2021, significant capital funding of £54m was identified for investment in the five Highland schools. Since this meeting, initial briefing and design work, and some engagement with internal and external stakeholders, has continued in line with the Council's commitment to deliver these priorities.

Design and build contractors have now been selected for all the projects to ensure that early engagement can take place with the Council's internal project teams in order that key delivery dates can be achieved.

Each project will have a Stakeholder Group comprising of parents, staff, local elected members, representatives of local community councils, and any other community partners that may be affected by the proposals. In addition, a strategy will also be developed for consulting with pupils to capture their feedback.

At the most recent meeting of the Council, Members agreed the scope, budget, phasing and timescale for 5 priority school projects and also agreed that these projects are to be incorporated into the Council's current capital programme.





# Consultation on a national health and social care service

A national consultation was launched on 17<sup>th</sup> August setting out the Scottish Government's proposals to improve the way social care is delivered in Scotland.

Social care includes support for people with physical disability, learning disabilities or mental health conditions, older people and those with dementia, people with or recovering from alcohol or drug addictions, those who are, have been or are at risk of being homeless, and children and families who may need additional support, or where children are unable to live with their own families. This consultation seeks views on creating a comprehensive community health and social care service that supports people of all ages.

Views are sought from as many people as possible – including people who access care and support, carers, members of the workforce and those who may access care and support in the future - which includes everyone.

A series of online engagement events are being held in August, September and October.

Find details below for online events and registration and a link to the consultation at:  
[www.consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/a-national-care-service-for-scotland](http://www.consult.gov.scot/health-and-social-care/a-national-care-service-for-scotland)

The screenshot shows the top of a consultation page. At the top left is the Scottish Government logo with the text 'Scottish Government Rìghaltas na h-Alba gov.scot'. To the right is a search bar. Below the logo are navigation links: 'Home', 'Find Consultations', 'We Asked, You Said, We Did', and 'Join our mailing list'. A blue banner below the navigation contains the title 'A National Care Service for Scotland'. The main content area has a section titled 'Overview' with the following text: 'This consultation sets out our proposals to improve the way we deliver social care in Scotland. The importance of our social care services has never been clearer than during the pandemic. In future, we want to make sure that our social care system will consistently deliver high quality services to everyone that needs them, throughout Scotland. Social care is an investment in our communities and our economy. We want to change the system from one that supports people to survive to one that empowers them to thrive, with human rights at the heart of it. Social care includes support for people with physical disability, learning disabilities or mental health conditions, older people and those with dementia, people with or recovering from alcohol or drug addictions, those who are, have been or are at risk of being homeless, and children and families who may need additional support, or where children are unable to live with their own families. The Independent Review of Adult Social Care recommended the creation of a National Care Service, with Scottish Ministers being accountable for adult social care support. However, the Scottish Government's ambition is to go beyond that. This consultation therefore seeks views on creating a comprehensive community health and social care service that supports people of all ages.' On the right side of the page, it says 'Closes 2 Nov 2021' and 'Opened 9 Aug 2021'. Below that is a 'Contact' section with the text 'National Care Service Team' and the email address 'NCSconsultation@gov.scot'.



# Andre

Andre is a loving and affectionate 9-year-old boy with autism.

He attends Drummond School in Inverness, and is settled so a family that lives within reasonable distance would be preferable. We are looking for a family that can look after him for the rest of his childhood. Andre responds well to routine and structure and communicates using PECS and sometimes verbally or through touch.

He requires constant supervision due to PICA (eating non-edible items /or putting them in his mouth). Andre loves books, stories and music activities. He will sing along to familiar songs with the most beautiful tuneful voice. He enjoys outdoor activities, including walks and having freedom to run.

In order to care for Andre, there will be a generous Foster Carer Fee and Allowance, this will be dependent upon your skills and childcare experience.

If you have any informal questions about Andre please contact Sue on: **07570 952 370** or Elaine on: **07835 793 150**

To register your interest please visit:

[www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption](http://www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption)

Highland Council  
Fostering and Adoption  
Service



# Angus

We currently have a 12 year old young person called Angus, he is looking for a family that can support his family in caring for him throughout his childhood. Those around Angus describe him as a sociable, bright, inquisitive and curious minded individual. He loves all things construction and likes to see how things work. Angus has a diagnosis of Autism and will require patience and an understanding of his circumstances. Angus attends a mainstream Secondary School with support.

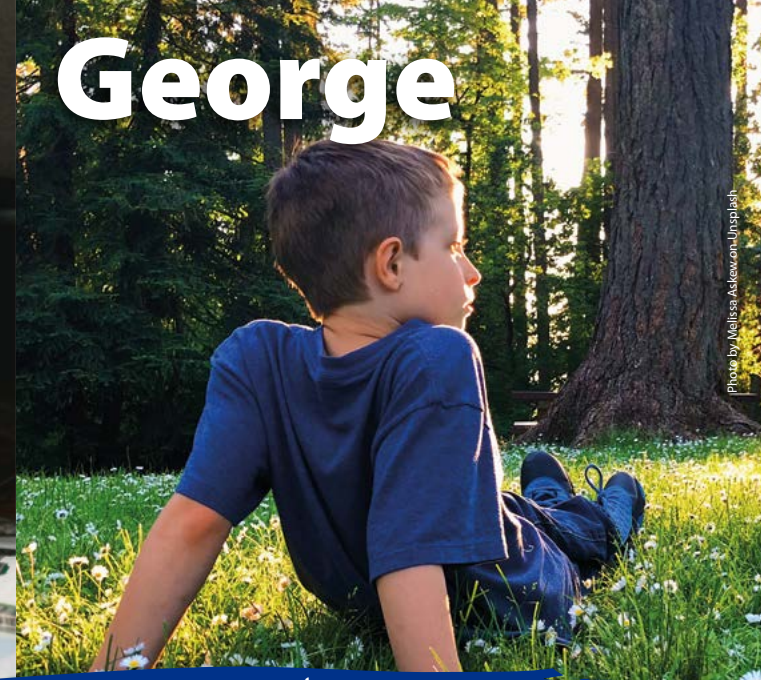
Angus thrives when there is routine and structure. He can struggle with sudden change and can become anxious and his behaviour requires careful managing. In order to care for Angus, there will be a generous Foster Carer Fee and Allowance, this will be dependent upon your skills and childcare experience.

If you have any informal questions about Angus please contact Sharon on: **07824 519 077** or Elaine on: **07835 793 150**

To register your interest please visit:

[www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption](http://www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption)

# George



We currently have an 11 year old young person called George. He is looking for a family that can care for him throughout his childhood.

Those around George describe him as a lovely and polite boy with a sensitive caring nature. He likes to play and explore and loves to help make and build things. He is developing a good sense of humour and becoming more sociable as he grows up. George has developmental delay and requires support to help him with daily tasks. He requires patience to support him with his communication as his speech can be unclear, especially if he is excited. George attends mainstream Primary School with support.

In order to care for George, there will be a generous Foster Carer Fee and Allowance, this will be dependent upon your skills and childcare experience.

If you have any informal questions about George please contact Ian on: **07570 950813**

To register your interest please visit:

[www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption](http://www.highland.gov.uk/fosteringandadoption)



# Drone filming



If drone footage would be useful to your service, or for further information please contact: [corporate.communications@highland.gov.uk](mailto:corporate.communications@highland.gov.uk)

# New Highland Councillors & May 2022 Council Elections

Following the resignations of Nicola Sinclair (Wick and East Caithness Ward) and Graham Ross (Inverness West Ward) by-elections were held on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> August to appoint two new Highland Councillors.

Cllr Jill Tilt (Scottish Liberal Democrats) was elected to represent Ward 3 and joins councillors Raymond Bremner (Scottish National Party); Willie MacKay (Independent) and Andrew Sinclair (Scottish Conservative and Unionist).



Cllr Colin Aitken (Scottish Liberal Democrats) was elected to represent Inverness West and joins councillors Bill Boyd (Scottish National Party) and Alex Graham (Scottish Liberal Democrats).



The by-election count took place electronically in Inverness Leisure on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> August. The media and public were able to follow the process live thanks to the Communications team providing live-on-line coverage on all social media channels.

Across all platforms, we had just under 3,000 viewers following the content live online, and we had positive feedback too.



## The current political make-up of The Highland Council is as follows:

- Independent – 25
- Scottish National Party – 18
- Scottish Liberal Democrats – 11
- Scottish Conservative and Unionist – 11
- Highland Matters – 4
- Scottish Labour Party – 3
- Sutherland Independent Group – 1
- Non-aligned – 1

## By-election Ward 21 Fort William and Ardnamurchan

A by-election will be held for Fort William and Ardnamurchan ward on 2<sup>nd</sup> December due to the sad death of Cllr Ian Ramon on 16<sup>th</sup> September.



# Don't lose your voice

## Residents urged to check their voter registration details are up to date

Council elections will take place across Scotland in May 2022. You may have seen the national campaign which is currently running to remind everyone to make sure they are registered to vote so they will be able to take part.

The Electoral Registration Officer for the Highlands is getting in touch with every household to check that the electoral register is up to date, and to identify any residents who should be registered but are currently missing.

### Have you moved home recently?

If so you may not be registered at your new address.

The easiest way to register is online at: [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)

The Election team are already planning for next May and will be looking for volunteers to come forward to help deliver the election. More details will follow as plans progress but anyone keen to play their part can find out more about the various roles and complete an application form via this link:

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections\\_and\\_voting/603/employment\\_at\\_elections](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/799/elections_and_voting/603/employment_at_elections)

or email: [elections@highland.gov.uk](mailto:elections@highland.gov.uk)



# Century since British Cabinet met in Inverness

The Highland Council and High Life Highland are acknowledging the centenary of the meeting of the British Cabinet which was held in Inverness Town House in 1921.

It was at 11am in the Town House Chamber on 7<sup>th</sup> September that the British Cabinet met. This was the only known time that a cabinet meeting was convened outside of London. The reason for the location of the meeting was that Prime Minister Lloyd George was on holiday at Gairloch and King George V was shooting at Moy.

Council Officer, William Bain, passed a sheet of paper round the sixteen cabinet members for their signatures. A framed copy of the signed paper is on display in the Chamber. The original is in Inverness Museum and Art Gallery. Included in the list is The Rt. Hon Winston S Churchill, who was then, the Secretary of State for Colonies.

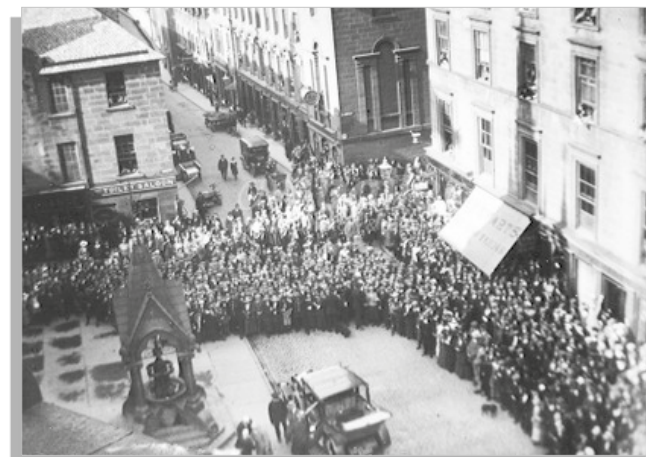
Provost of Inverness and Area, Cllr Helen Carmichael said:

“ It is one hundred years this week since the British Cabinet met in Inverness and crowds gathered outside the Town House for the occasion. Due to COVID-19 we are marking the historic occasion virtually through the magnificent Am Baile collection that is curated by High Life Highland. ”

Included in the Am Baile collection are photographs of the members of the cabinet inside the Town House Chamber; crowds gathered on Inverness High Street; Winston Churchill arriving at the Town House; the signatures of the Cabinet members gathered by William Bain; and Prime Minister, Lloyd George being greet at the Town House by the Provost.

It was not until another 87 years later that another Government Cabinet meeting was held in Inverness Town House. On this occasion, the Scottish Government Cabinet met on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2008 in the same room where Lloyd George held his Cabinet in 1921.

Photographs of the Cabinet meeting in 1921 can be viewed at [www.ambaile.org.uk](http://www.ambaile.org.uk) by adding 'British Cabinet Meeting' to the search.



Photos: Highland Photographic Archive (IMAG), Ambaile



## Who doesn't love a bargain?

† Correct at time of publication



Do you have any stores or websites that you visit frequently?

Make sure to check your benefits platform to see if we offer a discount.

Whether you want to treat yourself to the season's hottest trends or treat friends and family to gifts for less, make sure you don't miss the amazing discounts from top retailers in our Lifestyle Savings staff benefit!

Redeem these fantastic savings plus many more from your favourite brands, restaurants and attractions at:

<https://highlandcouncil.vivup.co.uk>

Or you could plan your next wild day at the Highland Wildlife Park and get **10% discount** on Day Tickets.



Discover Scottish wildlife and endangered animals from across the world against the stunning backdrop of the Cairngorms National Park. Whether driving

around the Main Reserve in your own car or investigating the park on foot, you're guaranteed a wild day out at Highland Wildlife Park. Watch out for wild cats, keep an eye out for roaming red pandas and don't forget to visit the polar bears!

You will need to book your Day Ticket in advance.

For instructions, login to the Employee Benefits Portal (<https://highlandcouncil.vivup.co.uk>) and find the Local Benefits (in the blue Lifestyle Savings section).

# Employee Assistance Programme

Our Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is a confidential counselling service that provides support to company employees and your family.



24/7



**Our EAP is available  
24/7, 365 days a year covering:**

- Counselling
- Legal information
- Financial information
- Consumer information
- Career guidance
- Life coaching
- Mediation
- Health information
- Health information
- Cancer support
- Autism support
- Infertility & pregnancy loss
- Elder care support
- Parent coaching
- International employee support



**Register online:**

<https://app.spectrum.life/login#>  
Organisation code: **j5n2Rh73**





# spectrum

# .life



is  
the Council's new Employee  
Assistance Programme.

Discover Spectrum.Life,  
our new online health and  
wellbeing service, by  
watching the video here:

**[www.bit.ly/Discover-Spectrum-Life](http://www.bit.ly/Discover-Spectrum-Life)**

and signing up using our  
organisation code.

Organisation Code

j5n2Rh73

Support includes a Counselling service with web chat support, fitness plans, legal assistance, financial advice, and eLearning content relating to a variety of wellbeing topics.

