

Highland Council Asset Transfer Request Approach

Asset Transfer Request Form

This is an asset transfer request made under Part 5 of the Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015.

Section 1: Information about the community transfer body (CTB) making the request

1.1 Name of the CTB making the asset transfer request

Invergordon Naval Museum and Heritage Centre

1.2 CTB address. This should be the registered address, if you have one.

Postal address: 140 High Street

Invergordon

Ross-Shire

Postcode: IV18 0AE

1.3 Contact details. Please provide the name and contact address to which correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request should be sent.

Contact name: James Collier

Postal address: Invergordon Naval Museum and Heritage Centre

140 High Street

Invergordon

Ross-Shire

Postcode: IV18 0AE

Email: invergordonmuseum@gmail.com

Telephone: [REDACTED]

X We agree that correspondence in relation to this asset transfer request may be sent by email to the email address given above. *(Please tick to indicate agreement)*

You can ask the relevant authority to stop sending correspondence by email, or change the email address, by telling them at any time, as long as 5 working days' notice is given.

1.4 Please mark an "X" in the relevant box to confirm the type of CTB and its official number, if it has one.

	Company, and its company number is	
X	Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), and its charity number is	SC035244
	Community Benefit Society (BenCom), and its registered number is	
	Unincorporated organisation (no number)	

Please attach a copy of the CTB's constitution, articles of association or registered rules.

1.5 Has the organisation been individually designated as a community transfer body by the Scottish Ministers?

No **X**

Yes

Please give the title and date of the designation order:

1.6 Does the organisation fall within a class of bodies which has been designated as community transfer bodies by the Scottish Ministers?

No

Yes **X**

If yes what class of bodies does it fall within?

SCIO

Section 2: Information about the asset requested

2.1 Please identify the asset - land or building(s) - which this asset transfer request relates.

You should provide a street address or grid reference and any name by which the land or building is known. If you have identified the land on the relevant authority's register of land, please enter the details listed there.

It may be helpful to provide one or more maps or drawings to show the boundaries of the land requested. If you are requesting part of a piece of land, you must attach a map and full description of the boundaries of the area to which your request relates. If you are requesting part of a building, please make clear what area you require. a drawing may be helpful.

Invergordon Town Hall

High Street

Invergordon

Ross-Shire

IV18 0AA

2.2 Please provide the UPRN (Unique Property Reference Number), if known.

This should be given in the relevant authority's register of land

UPRN:

Section 3: Type of request, payment and conditions

3.1 Please tick what type of request is being made:

for ownership (under section 79(2)(a)) - go to section 3A

for lease (under section 79(2)(b)(i)) – go to section 3B

for other rights (section 79(2)(b)(ii)) - go to section 3C

3A – Request for ownership

What price are you prepared to pay for the asset requested? :

Proposed price: £

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

3B – Request for lease

What is the length of lease you are requesting?

99 Years

How much rent are you prepared to pay? Please make clear whether this is per year or per month.

Proposed rent: £ 1 per Month

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to be included in the lease, or to apply to the request in any other way.

3C – Request for other rights

What are the rights you are requesting?

Do you propose to make any payment for these rights?

Yes

No

If yes, how much are you prepared to pay? Please make clear what period this would cover, for example per week, per month, per day?

Proposed payment: £ per

Please attach a note setting out any other terms and conditions you wish to apply to the request.

Section 4: Community Proposal

- 4.1 Please set out the reasons for making the request and how the land or building will be used.

This should explain the objectives of your project, why there is a need for it, any development or changes you plan to make to the land or building, and any activities that will take place there.

Objectives:

1. Regeneration: To provide access to improved leisure and cultural facilities, and enhance the high street, making Invergordon a better place to live and work;
2. Economic development: To provide a destination for visitors and workers in Invergordon and create jobs;
3. Social wellbeing: To tackle loneliness in the community; and
4. To ensure the Town Hall is restored, used and kept as something that will benefit the whole community

Why is there a need for it:

Invergordon is a small town on the Cromarty Firth with approximately 4,000 residents in the town and a further 65,000 within the wider Ross-Shire area. According to SIMD, areas of Invergordon are in the bottom 5-20% of deprivation in the country, and data shows this is worsening over time.

The port in Invergordon is an employment centre for the wider area and provides docking for cruise ships (125 ships and 200,000 visitors expected this year). The North Coast 500 passes within less than a mile of Invergordon town centre, with over 30,000 visitors per year. Invergordon provides facilities for a wide catchment area in the north Highlands, with people travelling to the town for supplies and services from across Ross-Shire and Sutherland. Opportunity Cromarty Firth and proposed development of a Green Freeport is likely to bring significantly more employment and business visitors to the area. However, workers and visitors often spend minimal time in Invergordon town, and this is unlikely to change without significant regeneration of the High Street and new leisure opportunities.

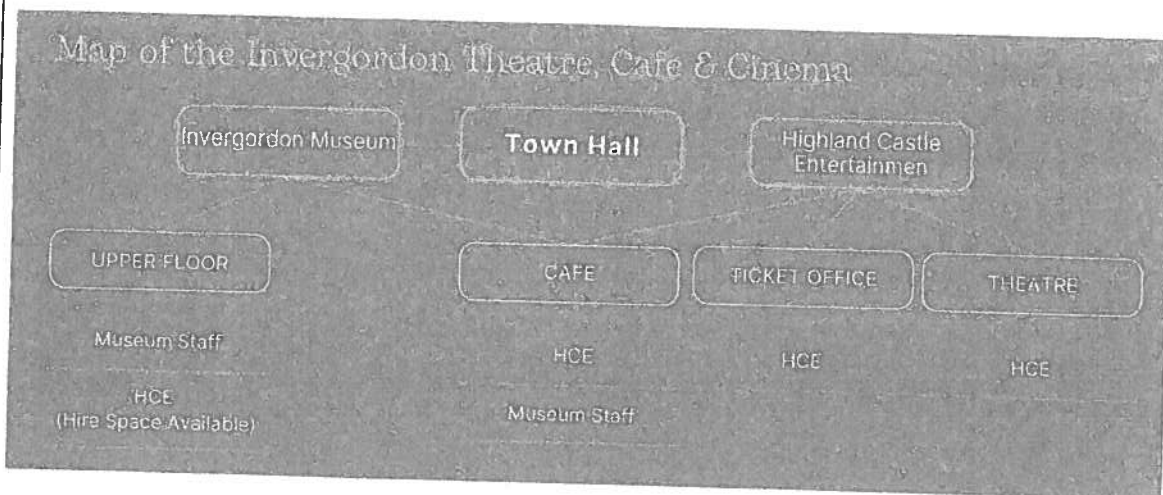
Invergordon Town Hall is an impressive but under-used building at the centre of the community which benefits from many aspects including its location on the High Street within easy walking distance of other shops and facilities, and less than 10 minutes' walk from the port. It is located in a historic part of town with the attractive church, old bank and other old buildings nearby the Town Hall. The building

includes a damaged B-listed sandstone façade, a 99 seater cinema/theatre in the rear, kitchen, toilet and storage facilities and two function rooms upstairs.

While Invergordon is a hub for industry and tourism in the Highlands, there are limited opportunities for leisure or cultural activities in the town. For example, the closest full-time cinema is in Inverness or Cromarty over 25 miles away, or Fort William or Thurso over 80 miles away. This negatively impacts the community which lives Invergordon and the immediate local area, with key challenges including:

1. There being few places in Invergordon for young people and others in the community to socialise or find entertainment, which leads to isolation for residents and/or people moving away;
2. The High Street being in decline with some businesses stating they are close to closing;
3. There being limited jobs and little to attract visitors and workers to spend time (and money) in Invergordon town beyond the port or industrial estates;
4. There being little in the way of spaces for meetings, gatherings and other such requirements.

What will we do:



Phase 1: 3 months – lease agreements and initial building upgrades

We will lease the Town Hall from Highland Council, and have agreement with an anchor tenant, Highland Castle Entertainment (HCE), who will sub-lease the Theatre/Cinema for an initial 5 year term (they have experience in putting on shows and events).

HCE will manage (and pay for) upgrades to the auditorium and AV equipment. HCE expects 8 week turn around before they are ready to operate.

The cinema/theatre space and café will be made wheelchair accessible.

Phase 2: first 3 years – opening of cinema, café and venue space

The Café will be run in collaboration with Highland Castle Entertainment and, after starting off with a modest but limited offering, it will be upgraded to become a high-end café. In initial stages, it will employ 2 staff members of staff, which may be funded by a contract with PSG for food for workers. This staff numbers will increase as the café is developed.

The upper floors of the building will originally be available to hire for meetings and group hires. A platform lift will be installed to ensure the whole building is accessible.

The Façade and roof will be improved to bring them to the required standard with the support of the Historic Environment Scotland Heritage Grants Programme.

Toilet facilities will be improved, and work will be undertaken to create a disabled toilet.

Phase 3: 3 years - 5 years – museum exhibition space and further building upgrades

The upstairs rooms will be converted into a genealogy centre and extension of the Invergordon Museum.

Delivery phase of building renovations including an upgrade to efficiency measures which will all be allocated to appropriate grants.

Phase 4: TBC long-term future potential

Once the cinema/theatre, café and museum space has been operating successfully for a number of years, proving demand and financial sustainability of operations, there may be an opportunity to further develop the space and improve facilities within the Town Hall.

Development of the building:

The Town hall requires some extensive upgrades to comply with Equalities Act 2010 and Building (Scotland) Regulations 2004 as required. This includes:

The Town Hall will be made accessible with ramps replacing steps in the Theatre/Cinema, and a platform lift to give access to the upstairs rooms and a disabled toilet on the 1st floor.

The face of the building (which is B listed) and roof of the building will be repaired in line with Planning (listed buildings and conservation areas) (Scotland) Act 1997

The plumbing will be looked at and we will ensure the pipes are coated throughout.

The kitchen will be upgraded into a fully operational catering facility.

The electrics will be checked, and any necessary work will be carried out.

There will be an asbestos check and any asbestos will be professionally removed.

The whole place will be decorated, and any necessary repairs will be carried out.

Advice will be sought on energy efficiency measures, including solar panels and other initial improvements.

Benefits of the proposal

- 4.2 Please set out the benefits to the community that you consider will arise if the request is agreed to. This should include:- economic, regeneration, health, social wellbeing, environmental benefits; or how this will tackle inequalities.

This section should explain how the project will benefit your community, and others. Please refer to the guidance on how the relevant authority will consider the benefits of a request.

Regeneration

Restoring the frontage of the Town Hall will be a significant improvement to the look and feel of Invergordon High Street, making it more appealing for visitors and residents. Bringing the building back into regular use as cinema/theatre, venue and café will create an active hub with a range of cultural and leisure opportunities for the local community and visitors/workers in Invergordon.

This isn't all about the Museum or our sub-tenant, it is about the town and making Invergordon a better place to live and work.

Economic Benefits

Job creation: Highland Castle Entertainment will have 4 FTE to manage their activities in the Town Hall (see attached business plan for more details). In addition, the museum will employ 1 part-time employee to oversee the lease and manage hire of the facilities.

Bring People into the Area: Creating a reason to come to Invergordon High Street and/or stay here longer will have a ripple effect on other businesses, for example locals visiting restaurants before/after cinema screenings or workers coming in for lunch or meetings and popping to the shops at the same time. All High Street businesses asked stated they felt these plans for the Town Hall would assist their financial sustainability.

As there is no similar cinema/theatre facility within the area, it will also bring residents from elsewhere in Easter Ross and Highland Council into Invergordon which will have additional benefits both for the town and for the wider local area.

Promoting the Town Hall down at the port as a community-led attraction including a café, cinema/theatre and in future a museum will help to bring additional cruise line passengers and workers into the town and so will in turn benefit the other shops.

Social Wellbeing

Our plans will allow the community to have more of a balance in life where they have more things they can attend. Visiting the cinema/theatre and café, and in future the museum, will give the community of Invergordon additional source of entertainment locally and it will also provide a space for congregating, allowing them to engage more with others in and out of the community.

The café will be a place where people in the community can go and socialise and meet new people. The upstairs will be available for hire to any groups with a requirement to use it. This will include youth groups.

Working to ensure the whole community benefits: The upstairs of the building will be available to hire for any group within the community. It will provide a safe space where they can visit and participate in the activities their group provides. In time, the whole Town Hall will be made accessible to all (for example with installation of ramps and a lift) so nobody will be stopped from participating or using any part of the Town Hall.

The theatre/cinema prices will be set by the sub-tenant. However, they have confirmed their intention to set prices at a rate which will allow people in the community to access these activities - 84% of local survey respondents said they would attend the cinema at least monthly with a ticket price in line with Highland Castle Entertainment's business plan.

Environmental Benefits

Scottish Ministers have adopted the National Planning Framework 4 which includes creation of 20-minute communities. These are communities where you have all you need within a 20-minute walk or cycle. Once the Town Hall is running as a café and cultural hub, residents of Invergordon and Alness will no longer have to travel further away for their entertainment as they will have a place on their doorstep. This will help to reduce car journeys and will fall in line with the Scottish government's plans.

In addition to this, we will be seeking funding to upgrade the energy efficiency and sustainability of the Town Hall building. For example, we will seek funding for solar panels on our roof and other upgrades to the building, such as the pipes and work on other areas, will mean the building is a lot more energy efficient.

Restrictions on use of the land

4.3 If there are any restrictions on the use or development of the land, please explain how your project will comply with these.

Restrictions might include, amongst others, environmental designations such as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSI), heritage designations such as listed building status, controls on contaminated land or planning restrictions.

The Property is a B-Listed Building. Works will be carried out to restore the degraded high street frontage of the building in line with planning conditions, with all necessary consents sought and work carried out and managed by specialist contractors, overseen by Historic Environment Scotland.

Negative consequences

- 4.4 What negative consequences (if any) may occur if your request is agreed to? How would you propose to minimise these?

You should consider any potential negative consequences for the local economy, environment, or any group of people, and explain how you could reduce these.

The only negative consequence from this will be that groups will no longer be able to use the downstairs area for craft fayres as they had previously done.

The main group who had been doing this was Isobel Rhind. The loss of their space will be mitigated as we will look to involve them in other ways in the Town Hall (e.g. by giving them cleaning work or other jobs which meet with their individual needs). They will also be given the opportunity to use another location for fayres in Invergordon where they would pay less than they have been for the use of the Town Hall through the current operator, HighLife Highland.

Capacity to deliver

- 4.5 Please show how your organisation will be able to manage the project and achieve your objectives.

This could include the skills and experience of members of the organisation, any track record of previous projects, whether you intend to use professional advisers, etc.

Lead tenant: Invergordon Naval Museum and Heritage Centre

The museum was founded in 2004 and is a registered SCIO. Upon first forming the museum, the founders were told that the museum wouldn't work. 19 years later the Museum is still running successfully and is currently working more for the community than it ever has. The trustees of the Museum have a wide range of skills and experience.

The Chair (Wendy Clark) is an experienced business lady with years of experience in running a multi-million-pound logistics business. She has been involved with the running of the Museum from the start. Her work has included securing over £60,000 worth of funding and support for the museum since it first opened. As part of the Museum, she will oversee the work on the Town Hall. She will oversee the accounting for the hall and will ensure budgets are appropriately set and adhered to. She will also be involved in the making of any contracts with third parties.

The vice-chair (James Collier) has a diploma in law, a general diploma with units in business management and a Level 3 Health and Hygiene for Supervisors Certificate. He has experience in dealing with contracts and employment law matters. Since coming on board, he has worked hard and has managed to gain funding for the museum, run events that brought in additional funding and worked on the creation of new programs to benefit the museum and the local community. He has also managed to gain a lot of support throughout the local area for our plans for the Town Hall. Additional to this, he has also been the driving force in communicating with and gaining us an agreement with Highland Castle Entertainment. Throughout the process he has also communicated with those in the Council, those in Invergordon community groups and with other local organisations to put together plans to take the Town Hall project forward. In this project he will take a leading role. He will Manage the Town Hall on behalf of the Museum, he will work with Wendy Clark to oversee the accounts, will contact and work with funders and tradespersons, oversee any employment and communicate with community bodies in relation to plans.

Sub-tenant: Highland Castle Entertainment

The sub-tenants, Highland Castle Entertainment, are a successful Invergordon-based business who have a vast amount of experience in organising and running social events for 13 years, with over 1,950 completed events and over 1,100 service reviews. They specialise in structure and rigging for live events for the entertainment industry. Their skills and expertise include promoting and managing high quality events in accordance with HSE regulations, managing employees and contractors, knowledge of the local area and needs of the community. This means they are the perfect partner to turn their part of the Town Hall into a fully equipped theatre/cinema and events venue.

Wider support network

We have other trustees/members with multiple skills within the museum such as those who have spent years dealing with big engineering contracts, those who have been responsible for working with and reporting to funding organisations and those who have previously managed accounts on behalf of companies. In addition, we also have access to the support of other community groups including Invergordon Development Trust, Invergordon Community Council, Saltburn and Westwood Community Council, Invergordon Church of Scotland and Invergordon Off The Wall. These groups plus a local councillor form the Invergordon community 'Umbrella Group' and they have, and will continue to, work with the Museum with regards the Town Hall. So far, they have assisted with the plans, given feedback, sought and provided information and assisted with investors. Some of the work that has informed us greatly has been work Invergordon Development Trust had done when they were looking to take on the Town Hall themselves. Within this group there is a huge range of talent, business knowledge and project experience.

External professional expertise and contractors

Where necessary, professional advisors will be used. For example, when it comes to the outside of the building, we have had verbal confirmation that Historic Environment Scotland are willing to fund the facial work. However, they use their own experts to manage the project.

The museum will use our existing accountants to manage financial reporting, and seek professional legal advice on contracts with Highland Council and sub-tenancy agreements. Additional advisors will also be used in relation to building upgrades and managing contractors where necessary.

Section 5: Level and nature of support

- 5.1 Please provide details of the level and nature of support for the request, from your community and, if relevant, from others.

This could include information on the proportion of your community who are involved with the request, how you have engaged with your community beyond the members of your organisation and what their response has been. You should also show how you have engaged with any other communities that may be affected by your proposals.

The Museum has a lot of backing from those within the community – please see letters of support from businesses, groups, schools, a church, MPs and MSPs all attached to our application. In addition to this we will be submitting the signatures of supporters from the online petition information (362 signatures, live from March 2023), initial in-person petition (c. 300 signatures from November open day at the Museum) and the in-person signatures received during our open day at the Town Hall held on 15th April 2023 and gained a further 150 signatures.

The community has been engaged through a range of methods. We have regularly put out update posts on local community social media groups and all have received a positive response.

We also sent out a survey to try and determine people's preferences in relation to the Town Hall. This survey was answered by 75 people. Of the respondents to the survey a massive 92% support the museum in their plans to take over the Town Hall. 88% of responders supported the upstairs becoming an extension to the Museum. 94.67% said they would not support the Town Hall becoming flats of similar and 73.33% felt so strongly on the issue of the Town Hall that they felt it would affect how they would vote in a future election.

Two community engagement events have been held. The first in November 2022 to get feedback on initial plans and gauge community support for progressing an Asset

Transfer Request, and the second in April 2023 in partnership with the sub-tenant Highland Castle Entertainment to answer questions and gather further feedback. Feedback has shaped our approach and has been incorporated into this application.

Additional conversation has been had with all the High Street Businesses and other businesses, such as Whyte & Mackay and PSG Marine and Logistics, in the local area as well as other individuals and all feedback has been extremely positive.

Section 6: Funding

- 6.1 Please outline how you propose to fund the price or rent you are prepared to pay for the asset, and your proposed use of the asset.

You should show your calculations of the costs associated with the transfer of the land or building and your future use of it, including any redevelopment, ongoing maintenance and the costs of your activities. All proposed income and investment should be identified, including volunteering and donations. If you intend to apply for grants or loans you should demonstrate that your proposals are eligible for the relevant scheme, according to the guidance available for applicants.

Our initial plans are to have a 99-year full repairing lease on the Town Hall with a monthly fee of £1. However, we are also looking to include a term stating Invergordon's Common Good Fund will be receiving a minimum of 20% of any profits the Museum makes from the Town Hall. Obviously, this would not be hard to cover.

The costs associated with the Town Hall, including Gas, Electric and Water, on a monthly basis, averaged out to £842.92 a month. The agreement we have in place with Highland Castle Entertainment, our sub-tenant, will produce £1,300.00 per month (plus a percentage of their profits). This is more than enough to cover these costs. We would be applying for Council Tax Exemption and other relief on account of being a charity. Highland Castle Entertainment's Business Plan for the Town Hall is attached and shows how they will achieve the funds to pay us for their rent.

It's hard to determine an exact cost for the full refurbishment of the building, in order to get it to our desired standard. However, a previous Elemental Cost Plan (attached), which was carried out by McLeod and Aitken, chartered quality surveyors, put the costs at around £430,000.00 to bring the building up to regulation. That report was from 2014 and there has obviously been a change in costs so, based on a calculation from a government calculator which takes into consideration the cost of inflation and other costs, the price for the work, as specified in that elemental costs plan, would be around £550,181.36. We anticipate costs to be at least double that amount.

The plan outlines costs for external work to the stonework and roof, formation of a new disabled toilet, alterations to current toilets, alterations to doors, new carpets, pipe installation, heating improvement, improvements to ventilation, lighting and power, improvements to security, repairs to windows and the installation of a passenger lift.

In order to complete the refurbishment, we will use a combination of profits from the Town Hall and Grants, of which there are many available.

The Grants we believe we will be eligible for are confirmed on a separate sheet and some of the pots offer funding which would, on their own, be enough to cover the whole project. However, it our plan to break the project down into a stage-by-stage basis as previously described. We have been clear with the public that this is not an overnight project and that is accepted.

Signature

Two office-bearers (board members, charity trustees or committee members) of the community transfer body must sign the form. They must provide their full names and home addresses for the purposes of prevention and detection of fraud.

This form and supporting documents will be made available online for any interested person to read and comment on. Personal information will be redacted before the form is made available.

We, the undersigned on behalf of the community transfer body as noted at section 1, make an asset transfer request as specified in this form.

We declare that the information provided in this form and any accompanying documents is accurate to the best of our knowledge.

Name: JAMES COLLIER

Address: 

Date: 20th April 2023

Position: Vice Chair

Signature 

Name: Wendy Clark

Address: [REDACTED]

Date: 20th April 2023

Position: Chair

Signature [REDACTED]

Checklist of accompanying documents

To check that nothing is missed, please list any documents which you are submitting to accompany this form.

Section 1 – you must attach your organisation's constitution, articles of association or registered rules

Title of document attached: Museum Constitution

Section 2 – any maps, drawings or description of the land requested

Documents attached: Yes – 196_ArchitecturalDrawings

Section 3 – note of any terms and conditions that are to apply to the request

Documents attached: Yes – Terms to be included in the Lease

Section 4 – about your proposals, their benefits, any restrictions on the asset or potential negative consequences, and your organisation's capacity to deliver.

Documents attached: Town Hall Business Plan (Museum), HCE Business Plan, The Back Up Plan, Declaration of Interest, Exemption from Cinema Licence Fee,

Section 5 – evidence of community support

Documents attached: Signatures 1, Signatures 2, Survey Data 1, Survey Data 2, Support Letters, Petition to give us Town Hall, Online petition.

Section 6 – funding

Documents attached: HCE Business Plan, Support Letters (the letter from PSG and the letter from Whyte & Mackay), Funding Routes, Copy of Monthly Billed Consumption, Email Re potential PSG Catering, COMMERCIAL LEASE AGREEMENT, Confirmation of Contract.

Search "Privacy Notices" on the Highland Council website to read our Privacy Statement in regards to Asset Transfer Request forms.