

The Highland Council

City of Inverness Area Committee – 5 March 2015

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|-------------|-----------|
| Agenda Item | 20(d) |
| Report No | CIA/21/15 |

Inverness Common Good Fund Grant and Capital Projects

Report by the Inverness City Manager

Summary

This report sets out the current applications for grant funding to be determined and the current status of capital projects.

1. Grants and Capital Projects

1.1 The current summary of funds available following the Grants Sub-Committee meeting on 10 November 2014 is set out in **Appendix 1**.

1.2 **Booklet A** includes details of current grant applications for more than £10,000. Members are invited to consider the following applications:

- 1) **Hilton Parish Church:** The Grants Sub-Committee recommended deferral of this application for further information.
- 2) **Uniqueness Tourism BID Ltd:** The Grants Sub-Committee although supportive of a new sales team promoting Inverness for Business Tourism recommended deferral of this application for further information and a more comprehensive Business Case.
- 3) **Inverness BID:** The Grants Sub-Committee recommended approval of the applications submitted by Inverness BID:
 - a. Operation Respect Easter/Summer 2015 - £5,550
 - b. Inverness Gull Project - £12,000
 - c. Inverness Community Safety Partnership - £12,000
 - d. Inverness Street Festival - £7,000
 - e. City of Inverness Floral Displays 2015 - £50,250
 - f. Coach Ambassador - £17,000

If the Committee approves the application funding would be from the "BID Partnership" cost centre.

- 4) **Castle Wynd Toilets:** The Grants Sub-Committee recommended approval of £16,000 from the Inverness Common Good Fund 2015/16 Revenue Budget. If the Committee approves the application a specific cost centre is to be created.

1.3 Inverness Angling Club – Request for Variation of Grant

The Inverness Angling Club has requested a variation of grant as set out in the letter of 17 February (Appendix 2). Members are asked to consider approving the amendment of the grant award from an annual waiver of rent to a one-off grant of (an equivalent sum to the annual rent) of £9,500.

1.4 **Appendix 3** details the current status of capital projects.

Recommendation

The Committee is invited to:

- (i) consider the applications for funding;
- (ii) approve the amendment of the grant award from an annual waiver of rent to a one-off grant of £9,500;
- (iii) scrutinise the current status of capital projects;

Designation: Inverness City Manager

Date: 11 February 2015

Authors: David Haas, Inverness City Manager
Jason Kelman, Project Manager

APPENDIX 1

Inverness Common Good Fund
Available Resource for Allocation

£

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Budget Balance Available - Grants | 350,000 |
| (Committed from previous financial years) | 160,904 |
| | 510,904 |

| Committee Date | Category | Award | Total for meeting | |
|---|--------------------------------|---------|-------------------|---------------|
| (Committed from previous financial years) | Grants < £10k | 54,404 | | |
| | Grants > £10k | 106,500 | | |
| | | | <u>160,904</u> | 350,000 |
| 12/05/2014 Grants Sub-Committee | | | | |
| | Grants ≤ £10k | 50,950 | <u>50,950</u> | 299,050 |
| 03/06/2014 City of Inverness Area Committee | | | | |
| | Grants < £10k | 9,900 | | |
| | Grants > £10k | 30,000 | <u>39,900</u> | 259,150 |
| 11/08/14 Grants Sub-Committee | | | | |
| | Grants ≤ £10k | 35,631 | 35,631 | 223,519 |
| 02/09/2014 City of Inverness Area Committee | | | | |
| | Grants >£10K | 110,347 | 110,347 | 113,172 |
| | Set Aside for Winter Payments* | 50,000 | 50,000 | 63,172 |
| 10/11/14 Grants Sub-Committee | | | | |
| | Grants < £10K | 17,586 | 17,586 | 45,586 |
| 02/12/14 City of Inverness Area Committee | | | | |
| | Grants > £10K | 25,000 | 25,000 | 20,586 |
| Grant returned by Advocacy Highland | | | | |
| | | 2,000 | 2,000 | 22,586 |
| 09/02/15 Grants Sub-Committee | | | | |
| | Grants < £10K | 27,714 | 27,714 | -5,128 |

*NB Pending reallocation of balance from Winter Payments

| | | | |
|--|-----------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| Budget Balance Available - Subvention | | | 40,000 |
| (Committed from previous financial years) | | | 23,000 |
| | | | 63,000 |
| Committee Date | Category | Award | Total for meeting |

| | | | | |
|---|------------|--------|---------------|---------------|
| (Committed from previous financial years) | Subvention | 28,018 | <u>28,018</u> | 34,982 |
| 12/05/2014 Grants Sub-Committee | Subvention | 10,000 | <u>10,000</u> | 24,982 |
| 11/08/2014 Grants Sub-Committee | Subvention | 4,500 | <u>4,500</u> | 20,482 |



17 February 2015

David Haas
Inverness City Manager
Town House
High Street
Inverness IV1 1JJ

Dear David

In July of last year, Inverness Angling Club applied to the Inverness Common Good Fund for a waiver of rent for the Town Fishings, leased by the club at a rental of £9,500 (plus VAT) per annum. This was to help the club re-establish financial reserves seriously weakened by substantial increases in rent and fishery board assessment, and a consequent 25 per cent loss of membership, over the past five years.

The City of Inverness Area Committee subsequently agreed an annual grant of £9,500, subject to certain conditions. Rather than a rent waiver, we would appreciate it if this could now be treated as a grant. We understand that no confirmation has been given regarding future applications although the committee have indicated that favourable consideration will be given for a further application on the back of a sound Business Plan.

The club recognises that it must ensure a suitable return for the Common Good Fund. We trust that the actions specified in the attached paper will fully meet that need.

I look forward to hearing from you

Yours sincerely


Alan Scott

Alan Scott
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IAC WORKS TO CREATE COMMON GOOD BENEFITS

1. Marketing

Day and weekly permit sales are now featured on the international rod booking service *FishPal*. Almost 1,000 potential angling visitors accessed the IAC section of the site in a couple of weeks from going live. This indicates a strong positive response from which visitor rod bookings will flow. Alongside this initiative, we have cut the price of visitor permits in a bid to attract more visiting anglers. Prices have been reduced from £35 to £25 per rod per day high season and to £15 low season. Peak season half-day permits will be available from 1300 to midnight at a cost of £15. This is unbeatable value for salmon and sea trout fishing on a river such as the Ness.

Benefits to Common Good and City

In 2013, a relatively poor season, visitors to the Town Fishings generated income of £5,779 for IAC from 231 angler days. Using the minimum estimates from the most recent economic impact study, this delivered over £30,000 of visitor expenditure in the City of Inverness. By building interest in our fishings we will generate additional economic benefits for the city.

2. Membership

We have introduced a special offer for anglers who have not been members of the club within the last five years. It offers a one-off discount of £50 on senior permits (£150 down to £100 for the season). This has already produced new members who otherwise might not have joined, and we expect more when the deal is advertised in the local press from early March. The offer led coverage of opening day on February 2, on STV and BBC TV (Alba), and in the Press and Journal, Inverness Courier and Highland News.

Benefits to Common Good and City

By building membership we will increase the already strong profile of the River Ness, its salmon and sea trout angling resources; the skills of its anglers; help ensure that more local people will enjoy the sporting facilities offered by the river; and help return the club to self sufficiency.

3. Works

IAC will carry out works in the Ness Islands, previously the responsibility of The Highland Council. These focus on the trimming of bank side bushes and overhanging branches that impede casting. Over the next two seasons, we will work with the council and the Community Payback Scheme to re-open access to the east bank of Provan's Pool – reinstalling an access footbridge, trimming bushes and trees and restoring eroded paths. The priority for 2015 is to complete the section from the bridge to the top of the lade, restoring access to a potentially valuable pool. To promote this, and stimulate interest among under 18s, we will launch a competition to name this untitled pool. Former world Speycastig champion Scott Mackenzie of Mackenzie Fly Fishing, who carries the reputation of the River Ness and its Speycasters to many parts of the world, has offered to donate a trout fly rod (worth some £350) as the prize for the junior suggesting the most appropriate name.

Benefits to Common Good and City

The works will ensure that the banks not currently part of the main grass cutting contract will be tidier. Other improvements will expand the pools available to local and visiting anglers, provide yet another reason for taking out membership and visiting permits, offer local economic spin-off and, importantly, stimulate interest in angling among 18s.

4. Holiday packages

IAC is keen to develop fishing holiday packages with local hotels, particularly those on the riverside. Councillor Ian Brown has offered to help us make contact with local hotel businesses through the BID project, of which he is a director. We are ready to enter into discussions on this at any time.

Benefits to Common Good and City

By developing angling packages IAC can further enhance the economic impact of angling on the community, adding significant value to the basic angling product.

5. Web site

We are planning a major upgrade of the club's web site. This will enable the placing of more immediate news and pictures, keeping our membership up to date and encouraging anglers to visit. Members will be able to register on the site, enabling us to make more immediate contact with individuals and groups at no cost. This will be particularly useful in contacting our junior members with information on training activities.

Benefits to Common Good and City

Web sites are a key point of contact in today's electronic world. A site that is attractive and informative, and provides up-to-date news and pictures is invaluable to the promotion of Inverness and its angling facilities.

6. Training

The club attracted a junior membership of 140 in 2014 and we aim to maintain that number in 2015. We recognise that training our young people is crucial to their education and development, and to the future of the club. Consequently, we have opened discussions with the Angling Development Board of Scotland to develop training packages for our junior section and the development of members as coaches. We intend to access training funds from the Scottish Sports Council.

Benefits to Common Good and City

Our under 18 members represent the future of the club, and an important element of the sporting life of the City of Inverness. While ensuring that they achieve proper training in all angling skills, we also aim to build the number of qualified coaches within the club.



Works Schedule

Introduction

The Inverness Common Good Fund approved a grant of £9,500 to Inverness Angling Club (IAC, effectively to enable the club to manage the Ness Fishings rent free for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017 (subject to annual review), with favourable consideration for a further two years. As part of that agreement, The Highland Council (THC) sought some return from the club through works on the Ness Islands. Under the terms of the 21-year lease to October 2014, this area was the responsibility of the THC.

Nature of Works

IAC offered to carry out simple works similar to the bank maintenance the club carried out above the Ness Islands. This would involve trimming bushes and overhanging tree branches that inhibited casting in various water levels. For example, bank side bushes can interfere with casting when anglers have to wade closer to banks in high water. It should be understood that these are not extensive or heavy works, nor do they pose any threat to valuable trees.

Locations of works

The areas in which these works may be required, on an annual or less frequent basis, are as follows:

Right Bank (Island Bank Road side)

The path up to the weir below Provan's Pool

Little Isle Pool

Left Bank (Bught side)

The area downstream from the bridge below the General's Well

The Little Isle Pool down to the Infirmary Bridge

Health and Safety

Most of these works are carried out using loppers – mostly from the bank, occasionally by wading – by experienced anglers used to wading in chest waders while fishing. Branches are trimmed using long-handled loppers/saws. Where heavier branches may require trimming, IAC uses power tools operated by individuals with the required operating licences. Works are normally carried out by teams.