

The Highland Council

Minutes of Meeting of the **City of Inverness Area Committee** held in the Council Chamber, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on 3 February 2025 at 10.00am.

Present:

Mr C Ballance	Mrs J Hendry
Mr B Boyd	Ms E Knox
Mr I Brown	Mrs I MacKenzie
Mr M Cameron	Mr A MacKintosh
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mr R MacKintosh
Mr A Christie	Ms K MacLean
Mr D Fraser	Mr D Macpherson
Mr K Gowans	Mr D McDonald
Mr A Graham	Mrs M Reid
Dr M Gregson	Mrs T Robertson

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager
Mr E McIntosh, Project Manager (Area Place Planning)
Mr S Dalgarno, Development Plans Manager
Mr S Grant, Roads Operations Manager
Mr M Gemmell, Principal Repairs Officer
Mr L MacDonald, Repairs Manager
Ms F Shearer, Area Education & Learning Manager
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Mrs G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in attendance:

Chief Inspector D Wilson, Police Scotland

An asterisk in the margin denotes a recommendation to the Council. All decisions with no marking in the margin are delegated to the Committee.

Mr I Brown in the Chair

Business

Preliminaries

Prior to the commencement of the formal business, the Chair referred to the Committee's decision that a report be brought to this meeting on the maintenance of amenity areas. He advised a Highland wide report on amenities was being prepared and that in the meantime it was proposed a Members briefing be held to discuss issues in the Inverness area. He confirmed that following the briefing a report would be brought to the Committee on this matter.

1. Calling of the Roll and Apologies for Absence Gairm a' Chlàir agus Leisgeulan

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs H Crawford, Mr D Gregg and Mr A Sinclair.

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statement Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt/ Aithris Fhollaiseachd

The Committee **NOTED** the following Transparency Statements:-

Items 4, 5, 10.b, 10.c and 10.d – Mr A Christie

3. New Years Honours Urraman na Bliadhn' Ùire

The Committee **NOTED** that the following individuals had been recognised in the New Year's Honours List: -

- Elizabeth Devlin McClurg (BEM)
- David Matthews (MBE)
- Karla Stevenson (KFSM)

4. Police – Area Performance Report Poileas – Geàrr-aithisg Coileanadh Sgìreil

Mr A Christie made Transparency Statements in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non-Executive Director of NHS Highland. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/01/25 by the Inverness Area Commander.

In discussion, Members raised the following main points:

- the plan to deploy officers to the City Centre be welcomed and the potential for additional resources to be made available to other communities in Inverness. In particular, reference was made to incidents of vandalism at Culloden Woods and speeding at the airport junction;
- further information was sought and provided on the nature of hate aggravated conduct in the area and the strong and robust approach being taken by the Police to such crimes;
- the potential for Police Scotland to work with the Council's Education Service to ensure hate crime had no place in Highland;
- in relation to the increase in shoplifting, it was confirmed a profile of crimes was being developed and the focus was on prevention, diversion and support through a multi-agency approach;
- in response to a query, it was explained the rise in sexual crimes reflected the strong messaging in public domain around reporting inappropriate behaviour and as a result there was more confidence in doing so;
- an assurance was sought and provided that the importance of police officers on the beat engaging and making eye contact with pedestrians would be reinforced to officers;
- the number of assaults on emergency workers was unacceptable and Members fully supported any action being taken by Police Scotland to reduce that number and provide support to those affected;

- the potential to improve the digital and non-digital mechanisms for the public and communities to report issues to Police Scotland and have these recorded, and the circumstances by which calls to the 999 were justified;
- further clarity was sought and provided on the role of the Police in relation to incidents of vandalism to chrome books outwith the control of schools if there was criminality involved. The importance of the focus being on education, diversion and support was highlighted;
- confirmation that the Chief Inspector would seek further clarity on the remit of Police Scotland in relation to the problems caused by the anti-social behaviour of gulls in the City; and
- the potential for the Council to increase investment in CCTV digital technology on the basis this would support the Police by saving time and resources in securing convictions.

During further discussion, the Chief Inspector advised that he would be content to meet with Members at regular ward briefings to consider specific ward challenges and issues.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED**:-

- i. progress made against the objectives set within the Highland Local Policing Plan 2023–2026 Year 1 attached as Annex A to the report, for the period covering 1 April 2023 – 31 December 2024; and
- ii. the change in format necessitated by a reduction in back-office capacity to prepare additional area committee reports.

5. Inverness Strategy Update

Fios às Ùr mu Ro-innleachd Inbhir Nis

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non - Executive Director of Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No CIA/02/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, clarification was sought and provided on progress with the high level outcome of a green and healthy City, the potential to include the Chapel Yard site in future plans and how this outcome linked with projects to provide more hotel accommodation in the City Centre. In addition, an explanation was provided in relation to the priorities and opportunities to deliver more affordable housing and quality green space in the City Centre. Members were advised that the Strategy consolidated priorities from a range of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies and was a tool for communicating and coordinating delivery of priority development and investment. There were a series of high-level priority outcomes as criteria for future development to be delivered through current and future projects to promote Inverness as a brand and enhance it as a place to live, work and visit.

During further discussion, Members commented that the Strategy identified a number of ways in which the Council in conjunction with stakeholders and partners had and could improve the quality of life, success and prosperity of Inverness. In relation to plans for vacant retail units in the City Centre, it was explained there was uncertainty about the viability of introducing more public services and community facilities into vacant units due to lack of resources. However, by charting out opportunities and showing how these could deliver on priorities it was hoped this would attract the necessary funding. There was a need for sustained engagement with retail sector and the Victorian Market demonstrated how small retail businesses could be successful.

Thereafter, it was suggested that all large city or town centres were undergoing transformation, and the Council should reconsider how it dispersed its staff and functions and provided more opportunities for the public to contact key services within the City Centre. A more aggressive and innovative approach be considered in relation to absentee private landlords to bring vacant premises back into use more quickly. Further clarification was then sought and provided on how the Strategy sat with the Council's place-based plans and it was confirmed while there was not a specific resource to evaluate the Strategy, it was hoped to report to Members on a similar basis in future.

The Committee **NOTED:-**

- i. the Inverness Strategy as a tool for communicating and coordinating delivery of priority development and investment for the city and area;
- ii. the vision and priority outcomes derived from a consolidation of existing national, regional and local plans and strategies, adopting these as a set of expectations and qualities for future development and investment to be delivered through current and future projects; and
- iii. that delivery of the projects, priorities and vision identified within the Strategy would rest upon targeted use of existing tools and a collaborative approach to cross-sector partnership working.

6. Area Roads Capital Programme 2025/26 Prògram Calpa Rathaidean Sgìreil 2025/26

There had been circulated Report No CIA/03/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, Members welcomed the investment in works to footpaths in the area as set out in the Programme.

During further discussion, concern was expressed at the delay in a permanent repair being carried out to a pothole on Culloden Road, Inverness, resulting in vehicle damage and complaints, and the potential for such repairs to be undertaken more rapidly going forward. In response, Members were advised that there were challenges in undertaking permanent repairs over the winter months due to weather conditions, low temperatures and traffic volumes. New thermal patcher technology was being trialled so that permanent repairs could be undertaken in low temperatures, and it was hoped this technology could be deployed in the area going forward.

It was requested that consideration be given to the potential for a proportion of the capital budget to be allocated towards improving drainage by investing in works to culverts and other infrastructure as more extreme weather events were experienced. It was confirmed that officers would have further discussions on the potential for strategic capital funding to be identified for such works.

The Committee **APPROVED** the proposed 2025/26 Area Roads Capital Programme for the City of Inverness and Area.

7. Housing Revenue Account: Garage Rents 2025/26 **Cunntas Teachd-a-steach Taigheadais: Màil Gharaidsean 2025/26**

There had been circulated Report No CIA/04/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, it was suggested that a proliferation of storage containers was being observed in Inverness and whether there was a need to invest in more garage sites. In this regard, confirmation was sought and provided on current occupancy levels of Council garages and garage sites by ward and the numbers being rented by tenants and non-tenants.

Thereafter, it was suggested that if the Council was serious about localism, then one of the most important decisions that should be taken by the City of Inverness Area Committee was in relation to Council house rents. This would allow local Members to feedback with better knowledge of appropriate rent levels across the area.

In response, it was suggested the above proposal was premature given that discussions were currently ongoing on improving and increasing the powers of Area Committees.

Mr I Brown seconded by Mr C Ballance **moved** that an 8% rent increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites in 2025/26.

As an **amendment**, Mr A Christie seconded by Mrs T Robertson moved that a 8% rent increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites in 2025/26 and that from 2026/27, the Committee believe Council House Rents be determined by the City of Inverness Area Committee for property within that area.

On a vote being taken, there were **eleven** votes for the **motion** and **eight** votes for the **amendment**, with no abstentions. The **motion** was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:

Motion:

Mr C Ballance, Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr M Cameron, Mr D Fraser, Mr K Gowans, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mr R MacKintosh, Ms K Maclean, Mrs M Reid

Amendment:

Mr A Christie, Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

Decision

The Committee **AGREED** that an 8% rent increase be applied to Inverness Garages and Garage Sites in 2025/26.

8. Housing Performance Report – 1 April 2024 to 30 September 2024 Aithisg Coileanaidh Taigheadais – 1 Giblean 2024 gu 30 Sultain 2024

There had been circulated Report No CIA/05/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In discussion, clarification was sought and provided on the reasons for the underspend on the heating/energy efficiency budget. It was explained this reflected the time required to set up projects and that any slippage would be carried forward to the next financial year.

During further discussion, it was suggested performance reporting should revert to the previous arrangement whereby housing management and repairs performance was presented to the Committee in a combined report on a quarterly basis to ensure the information was made available to Members timeously.

Following on from the above, concern was expressed at the need for more focus on improving performance on re-let times given the amount of rent loss to the Council over the period due to voids.

The Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance for the period 1 April 2024 – 31 December 2024.

9. Associated School Group Attainment Overview Foir-shealladh air Buileachadh Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte

There had been circulated Report No CIA/06/25, No CIA/07/25, and No CIA/08/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - People.

The Chair advised that, if required, three separate briefings would be held on each of the Associated School Groups (ASGs) covered by the report and Members invited to attend those linked to their ward. A report on the other ASGs in the area would be brought to the Committee at its next meeting on 19 May 2025.

In discussion, the following main points were raised:

- a query in relation to the calculation of school rolls and how a significant increase in pupil numbers would be accommodated, reference being made to Culloden Academy ASG's forecasted roll given there was significant new housing development planned for the area. It was confirmed the Team responsible for calculating the school roll data would be asked to respond to Mrs M Reid directly on this matter;
- a query as to the purpose of including school roll forecasts in the report on the basis information on the actual pupil numbers in schools would be more relevant for Members;

- confirmation was sought and provided that absences in respect of non-attenders were recorded separately and measures put in place to engage with those young people and their families around improving their attendance;
- whether the number of S4 leavers at Culloden Academy this year would be a continuing trend due to there being more modern apprenticeship and employment opportunities and noting the Head Teacher would be able to give more insight on this issue;
- in relation to school capacity, separate figures be provided for school infrastructure and modular units/temporary classrooms to show the pressure on space at Culloden Academy. It was confirmed this point would be fed back to the relevant officers;
- an explanation was sought and provided on Culloden Academy's own standard and quality gradings and the work undertaken by officers, Head Teacher and staff in response to any concerns and deliver improvements;
- it would be helpful for local Members to be kept informed of any issues arising within the ASGs and on the plans to address those issues;
- an update was sought and provided on the Head Teacher position at Inverness Royal Academy and the engagement undertaken with the parent council and parents. It was confirmed the recruitment process was currently ongoing and it was hoped to make an appointment in the near future; and
- a point as to the connection between the forecasted decrease in school roll and capacity in respect of Millburn Academy and the stagnation of the housing market in the City Centre. It was noted that while the data was subject to change any under capacity would help ease pressure on placing requests.

During further discussion, it was suggested the capacity figures across the ASGs had to factor in the large number of jobs that would be created by the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and associated families.

Thereafter, it was queried why the average total tariff score for leavers was below the virtual comparator for all three schools and the action being taken to improve performance to the level of or above the comparator. It would be helpful for direct discussions to be held with Head Teachers on this matter once the most current data was available.

Following on from the above, the steady improvement in attainment at primary level across the ASGs was highlighted and the schools be congratulated in this regard. An explanation was sought and provided on the main reasons including the increased focus on improvement through the collaborative improvement framework and hard work and commitment of Head Teachers, staff and lead officers.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the content of the reports related to Culloden Academy, Inverness Royal Academy and Millburn Academy and that Ward Member Briefings based on Schools Clusters would be held in respect of any local issues as required.

10. Inverness Common Good Fund (ICGF)

Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis

- a) Inverness Common Good Fund - 2023/24 Annual Accounts and Final Monitoring**
Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis – 2023/24 Cunntasan Bliadhnail agus Sgrùdadh Deireannach

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/09/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In response to a query, Members were advised that it was understood the solar panels at the Victorian Market had been switched on over the period of the last ten years.

In discussion, it was suggested the solar panels had been generating for some of the time over the period and the relevant officer had been asked for details of the generation of solar PV generation across the Council's estate since 2012.

The Committee **NOTED** the final monitoring report (Appendix 1) and Statement of Accounts (Appendix 2) for the Inverness Common Good Fund for the year ended 31 March 2024.

- b) Financial Monitoring**
Sgrùdadh Ionmhasail

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non - Executive Director of Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Committee **NOTED** the financial monitoring report to 31 December 2024 and that overall expenditure is within agreed budgets excepting estimated outturns detailed in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

- c) Inverness Common Good Fund Budget Setting for 2025/2026**
Suidheachadh Buidseit Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Nis airson 2025/26

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non - Executive Director of Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/11/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, it was requested that a report be brought to a future Committee on the potential to increase investment in CCTV in light of the number of assaults on emergency responders as reported by Police Scotland. Members were advised that the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee had agreed to repurpose funds towards CCTV improvements within the City Centre and a report would be brought forward as requested.

Thereafter, an explanation was sought and provided on the element of the budget allocated to poverty and inequalities, reference being made to the recommendation from the Members briefing that a proportion (70%) of the ICGF grants budget be ringfenced for this purpose.

The Committee **APPROVED** the Common Good Fund budget for 2025/2026 as detailed within the report and appendices of the report.

d) Grants Applications over £10,000
Iarrtasan Tabhartais thar £10,000

Mr A Christie made a Transparency Statement in respect of this item in his capacity as a Non - Executive Director of Inverness BID. However, having applied the objective test, reviewed his position in relation to the item and any personal connection, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

There had been circulated Report No. CIA/12/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

In this connection, there had been circulated separately a copy of supporting documentation as Booklet A.

The Committee **NOTED** the terms of the Inverness Common Good Fund Budget for 2025/26 and **AGREED**:

i. the applications in Booklet A for funding from the 2025/26 budget as follows:

- a. Wider City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2025 - £22,872;
- b. Operation Respect Easter/Summer/Autumn 2025 – £14,804;
- c. Safe Inverness Project 2025/26 - £10,750;
- d. Coach & Visitor Ambassador Project 2025 - £23,847

e. The City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2025

During discussion, concern was expressed at the need to allocate more funding towards poverty and inequalities. It was suggested that a Members workshop be held in August 2025 to consider future funding for floral displays, potential means of reducing costs and more effective and sustainable alternatives to promote the City Centre whilst continuing to support the Grow Project. In particular, funding should be used to support the floral clock and other areas around Inverness Castle.

Thereafter, the importance of the annual floral displays in promoting and attracting tourists to the City Centre was highlighted. In allocating scarce resources, it was important to balance the benefits, including the tourist spend that supported social enterprises in the City, against needs around poverty and inequalities. This process should be open and transparent and the partners involved in the project invited to participate in the workshop.

Following on from the above, an amendment to the application was proposed to keep the existing number of baskets (403) and move six of the baskets from Bridge Street (opposite Primark) to the Victorian Market. All City Members be encouraged to attend the briefing in August 2025 to discuss next year's floral arrangements.

At this point, it was confirmed that a site visit to Bught Nurseries was being arranged in May 2025 and this would help inform Members on the points raised and that arrangements would be made for a workshop to be held in August 2025 as requested.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** the application in Booklet A for The City of Inverness Annual Floral Displays 2025 for the sum of £54,272 based on an amended proposal to keep the existing number of baskets (403) and move six of the baskets from Bridge Street (opposite Primark) to the Victorian Market. All City Members be encouraged to attend the briefing in August 2025 to discuss next year's floral arrangements.

Booklet B: Inverness Gull Project 2025

In summary, Members raised the following key points:

- despite a declining gull population, the indications were that anti-social behaviour by gulls in the City was a growing problem. This suggested that egg and nest removal was not working and the need to consider new and innovative approaches;
- human behaviour had inadvertently created an environment for aggressive gull behaviour in public spaces, outdoor seating areas and playgrounds. The public continued to discard takeaways and feed gulls and businesses and food outlets continued to leave refuse outside;
- concern that licence applications to NatureScot for egg and nest removal would continue to fail due to a lack of real data as to the extent of the problem. Inverness BID's Gull Incident Reporting portal was welcomed in this regard and it was hoped the portal would be used by the public;
- initiatives be considered that focused on educational programmes for the public, encouraged businesses to have proper waste management, and considered the design of bins to prevent the overflow of waste;
- the aim should be to ensure gulls had their own thriving habitats and this required collaboration with local and national governments, partners including NatureScot, businesses and the public;
- Inverness BID's proposal supported by discussions with Council officials and NatureScot included awareness raising through educational campaigns, events, and local partnerships, a range of preventative and non-lethal measures and plans to build up a stronger body of evidence to support licence applications;

- there were reputational, safety, public health and wellbeing issues for the City and the Council write to the Minister responsible to highlight the impact of the change in NatureScot's policy of limiting licences;
- reference to the success of East Ayrshire's gull management programme and the need to take action before the next breeding season;
- the progress being made with the provision of gull proof bins in Highland compared to other proactive local authorities;
- the removal of gull nests and eggs had resulted in a noticeable improvement being observed in the City Centre over the summer;
- the project was not the right approach for the public and visitors to Inverness and should be reconsidered with a focus on increased investment in nest and egg removal;
- NatureScot be asked to reconsider its licensing policy and invited to participate in a site visit to the City Centre to observe the extent of the problem; and
- whilst previous action had been effective, this was no longer an option in terms of the current licensing policy.

At this point, the Senior Community Development Manager advised that it was the view of all the parties involved that this inclusive gull programme would not be effective if the application was not agreed in its entirety. Members were advised that as the application involved an allocation of £9,663 to be paid from reserves, and given the agreed moratorium on applications to the 2024/25 grants budget as it had been fully allocated, this would require a suspension of Standing Orders.

On that basis, Mr I Brown, seconded by Dr M Gregson, **moved** to suspend Standing Order 34.

As an **amendment**, Mr C Balance, seconded by Mr R Mackintosh, moved not to suspend Standing Order 34.

On a vote being taken, there were fourteen votes for the **motion**, two votes for the **amendment**, and one abstention. The **motion** was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:

Motion:

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Ms K Maclean, Mr D Macpherson, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

Amendment:

Mr C Ballance, R MacKintosh

Abstention:

Mr M Cameron

Decision

The Committee **AGREED** that Standing Order 34 be suspended.

Mr I Brown, seconded by Dr M Gregson, **moved** to award the 2025 Inverness Gull Project the full application sum of £27,050 on the basis that £6,803 of the grant approved in 2024 be repurposed towards the Gull Management Programme 2024/25 along with a further sum of £9,663 to be paid from reserves noting the Grants budget had been fully allocated, and to:

- acknowledge the commitments made by the Council, Inverness BID, and the city's population, to limit the problems caused by the growing and increasingly aggressive bird population.
- recognise the overall vulnerability of several natural bird species, the expectations placed on NatureScot in its conservation goals, and the consequent reduction in granting licence applications for egg and nest removal.
- support the range of preventative and non-lethal measures proposed, and would also seek to maintain egg and nest removal.
- urge NatureScot to expedite the licensing process, working closely with Inverness BID and local conservation groups.
- write to the Minister responsible to highlight the situation here with the purpose of creating more constructive relations with NatureScot
- seek to enhance community involvement, and to increase public awareness through educational campaigns, events, and local partnerships, highlighting the programme's environmental and community benefits.
- Implement with partners a regular monitoring system to track the programme's success, identifying the positive impacts for future support.

As an **amendment**, Mr C Balance, seconded by Mr R Mackintosh, moved to support this programme by awarding £12,229 towards the costs of dealing with gulls, as outlined in the BID application, except for the two items relating to egg and nest removal.

On a vote being taken, there were thirteen votes for the **motion**, two votes for the **amendment**, and one abstention. The **motion** was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:

Motion:

Mr B Boyd, Mr I Brown, Mr A Christie, Mr D Fraser, Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Mrs J Hendry, Ms E Knox, Mrs I Mackenzie, Mr A MacKintosh, Mr D Macpherson, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

Amendment:

Mr C Ballance, R MacKintosh

Abstentions:

Ms K Maclean

Decision

The Committee **AGREED** to award the 2025 Inverness Gull Project the full application sum of £27,050 on the basis that £6,803 of the grant approved in 2024 be repurposed towards the Gull Management Programme 2024/25 along with a further sum of £9,663 to be paid from reserves, noting the Grants budget had been fully allocated, and to:

- acknowledge the commitments made by the Council, Inverness BID, and the city's population, to limit the problems caused by the growing and increasingly aggressive bird population.
- recognise the overall vulnerability of several natural bird species, the expectations placed on NatureScot in its conservation goals, and the consequent reduction in granting licence applications for egg and nest removal.
- support the range of preventative and non-lethal measures proposed, and would also seek to maintain egg and nest removal.

- urge NatureScot to expedite the licensing process, working closely with Inverness BID and local conservation groups.
- write to the Minister responsible to highlight the situation here with the purpose of creating more constructive relations with NatureScot
- seek to enhance community involvement, and to increase public awareness through educational campaigns, events, and local partnerships, highlighting the programme's environmental and community benefits.

11. Ward Discretionary Budget Applications **Iarrtasan Buidseat fo Ùghdarras Uàird**

The Committee **NOTED** that the following City of Inverness Ward Discretionary Budget applications had been approved since 18 November 2024:-

Ward 12

- Highland Schools Wind Orchestra (HLH): 2025 Tour to Augsburg Germany - £300
- Aird Community Trust: Kirkhill Community Centre Upgrades - £2,500
- Glenurquhart High School Parent Council: School uniform initiative - £750
- Beaulieu Community Trust: Sports Association Asset Transfer - £2,000

Ward 13

- Highland Schools Wind Orchestra (HLH): 2025 Tour to Augsburg Germany - £300
- Old School Clachnaharry: Woodworking Enterprise Project - £911.23
- Torvean Avenue Legal Fee - £344

Ward 14

- Trinity Life Church - TLC Community Hall Enhancement - £1,000
- Highland Print Studio: Wise Guys - £1,500

Ward 15

- Inverness Foodstuff: Supporting Families at Christmas - £1,200

Ward 16

- Highland Schools Wind Orchestra (HLH): 2025 Tour to Augsburg Germany - £300

Ward 17

- Culloden - Balloch Baptist Church: Warm Space Project - £2,000

Ward 19

- Highland Schools Wind Orchestra (HLH): 2025 Tour to Augsburg Germany - £300

12. Minutes **Geàrr-chunntas**

The following Minutes had been circulated for noting or approval as appropriate:-

- City of Inverness Area Committee held on 18 November 2024 – **NOTED**;
- Inverness Events and Festivals Working Group held on 13 January 2025 - **APPROVED**; and
- Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee held on 20 January 2025 - **APPROVED**.

The meeting was closed at 2.09pm.