

The Highland Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the **Nairnshire Committee** held Remotely on 26 May 2025 at 10am.

Present:

Mr M Green
Ms B Jarvie
Mr L Fraser
Mr P Oldham

In Attendance:

Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager
Mr J Henderson, Housing Manager
Ms C MacKenzie, Housing Options Officer, (South)
Ms F Shearer, Area Education and Learning Manager
Mr J MacLean, Bereavement Services Manager
Mr E McIntosh – Community Support Officer
Mrs L Dunn, Joint Democratic Services Manager
Ms K Arnott, Committee Officer

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 M Green in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence Leisgeulan

There were no apologies for absence.

2. Declarations of Interest Foillseachaidhean Com-pàirt

The Committee **NOTED** the following declaration of interest:-

Item 5.b – Mr L Fraser

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

The Committee **NOTED** the following Good News:-

- congratulations and credit was extended to Nairn Golf Club for hosting the globally prestigious Women's Amateur Championship on the 9 – 14 June 2025 and reference was made to the economic benefits this would bring to Nairn;
- congratulations were extended to Nairn St Ninian Football Club in reaching the final of the Domino Regional Cup which would be held on 31 May 2025 at Forest Park, Burghead against Culter;

- the Nairn Service Point would be extending their opening hours with effect from 2 June 2025. The new hours would be 9.30am to 12.30pm on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 1.30pm – 4.30pm on Tuesday and Thursday. Full details of the new opening hours would be published on the Council's website and the signage at the Service Point would be updated;
- the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership had received funding for a further two years and this was welcomed. Reference was made to the improved governance arrangements and the positive engagement being achieved. In addition, grants of up to £10,000 were available through the Highland Community Led Local Development Fund. It was highlighted that this funding had been underclaimed in Nairn and a plea was made for applications to be submitted prior to the closing date of 30 May 2025;
- there were three members of staff based at the Court House in Nairn that could provide advice to people dealing with arrears and help with income maximisation. Reference was also made to the Council increasing the welfare advice staffing levels to help alleviate poverty;
- gratitude was extended to Ros Philip, District Manager at Nairn Community Hospital, who had recently retired and had been replaced by Kara McNaught;
- donations were sought for the forthcoming picnic event at the Riverside Park being held in June 2025;
- the new roundabout on the A96 at Upper Delnies had been open since 23 May 2025. Accordingly, the Welcome to Nairn signs had been relocated and the new speed limits had been implemented which had been welcomed by communities on the west side of Nairn. In addition, work continued with the aim of having the 30mph speed limit reduced to 20mph on the A96 at the east entrance to Nairn; and
- paths at Kingsteps Quarry were being improved, which was appreciated by residents. This had not been funded from the Community Regeneration Fund, with funding having been secured from another source.

4. Highland Charities Trust - Allocation of Funds **Urras Charthannasan na Gàidhealtachd – Riarachadh Mhaoinean**

There had been circulated Report No NC/07/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- thanks was extended to the team at the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) for administering disbursements of the hardship funds. It was recognised that £2,000 was not a lot of money but further work would be undertaken to look at the feasibility of allocating a larger sum in the future along with modified procedures; and
- in response to a question, it was clarified that work had not yet been undertaken in regard to how the capital funding (approximately 50% of both the Nairn Poor Fund and Children's Fund) would be utilised. There would be further discussion with Members on this. It was recognised that these sums were relatively small and the funds could be transferred to the CAB at the appropriate time.

Thereafter the Committee **AGREED**:

- i. to allocate funds from the Nairn and Auldearn Poor Fund to be used as a form of Hardship Fund to serve the people of Nairn and Nairnshire; and

- ii. that the Nairn Citizens Advice Bureau administer the funds as part of the 'Peoples Pot' currently administered by CAB.

5. Nairn Common Good Fund (NCGF)

(a) Nairn Common Good Fund – Annual Review Maoin Math Coitcheann Inbhir Narann

There had been circulated Report No NC/08/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- Members thanked the team for their efforts. The NCGF was now being operated in a more transparent and professional manner which was welcomed. The assets were being utilised for a wide range of activities which were generating income and would increase funds;
- it was suggested that a power point should be installed at the Team Hamish seating area but concern was expressed that in doing so this area might be used as a performance space and planning permission had not been granted for this type of activity. It was indicated that an appropriate public entertainment licence would be required for events/performances to be held in this area. It was stressed that the space had been designed, and permission granted, on the basis of this being an area for contemplation and assurance had been provided to local residents that it would be used in this manner. It was suggested that appropriate signage should be erected to inform the public on the use of this area;
- Members commended the work of the Common Good Development Officer with reference made to the improved management of the NCGF and the strong focus on improving the wellbeing of the community which was praised;
- clarity was sought on progress with the next stage of the Riverside Development Plan during which it was confirmed that this would encompass the whole Riverside area;
- the consultation had been worthwhile and the Engagement Group had a valuable role in ascertaining community feedback. The support for the Nairn Community Arts Centre and the establishment of the Hardship fund was welcomed. It was felt the Engagement Group should continue as it was a valuable forum providing the opportunity to be a helpful sounding board and had generated a number of new ideas;
- clarity was sought in respect of option 2, during which it was explained that it was intended to change the Terms of Reference of the Engagement Group to progress partnership working in terms of Common Good projects/initiatives, keep the business focussed and avoid duplication by directing business to existing community groups;
- concern was expressed that views were being sought on Nairn issues from the Community Planning Partnership the membership of which was from across Highland and did not involve people from Nairn. However, assurance was provided that invites to the Nairn and Nairnshire Community Partnership meetings were directed to local people in Nairn. It was reported that the meetings had been very productive with positive progress being made via Action Plans. However, it was felt that various groups/organisations attended

Community Planning Partnership meetings to have their plans confirmed and it was suggested that it might be more appropriate for these to be presented to local Area Committees;

- it was queried whether there should be two representatives from each Community Council on the Engagement Group and whether the survey had been issued to the substitute representatives. However, it was felt that one representative from each community council was the fairest approach noting that this did not need to be a designated person, i.e. community councils could rotate/select their representative to attend on a meeting by meeting basis; and
- it was felt that the Engagement Group meetings had become more positive as they progressed and they had been well attended.

Thereafter the Committee **NOTED**:

- i. the progress over the last 12 months in relation to the Nairn Common Good Fund within section 5 of the report;
- ii. the progress made by the Nairn Common Good Officer and **AGREED** an extension to the current post for a further 2-year period as outlined in section 6 of the report; and
- iii. the review of the Nairn Common Good Engagement Group and its findings and **AGREED** option 2 as set out in section 7.5 of the report.

(b) Common Good Fund Allocations – Over £10,000
Riarachaidhean Maoin Maith Choitchinn – Thar £10,000

Declarations of Interest: Mr L Fraser made a Declaration of Interest as a committee member of the Nairn Highland Games and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, he left the meeting for the determination of this item.

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

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- Members commended the amount of work that had been undertaken and expressed their appreciation to all those involved;
- the Nairn Highland Games was the mainstay of the community and more committee members would be helpful; and
- the NCGF was the main sponsor of the Nairn Highland Games and this needed to be promoted.

Thereafter, the Committee **AGREED** £12,000 be allocated from the Nairn Common Good Fund to support the Nairn Highland Games as per the application in Appendix 1 of the report.

6. Housing Performance Report 1 April 2024 - 31 March 2025
Aithisg Choileanaidh Taigheadais 1 Giblean 2024 - 31 Màrt 2025

There is circulated Report No NC/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- clarification was sought and provided on Table 5 - Antisocial behaviour cases – at para 7.3 of the report during which it was explained that these were cumulative numbers. The Committee was also advised that this would be clearer in future reports as the format of this table would be changed to the same style used for arrears along with information on the action that had been taken;
- although the current day economic difficulties were acknowledged, a desire was expressed for the rent arrears to be reduced. It was highlighted that most cases had less than £500 of arrears and it was confirmed that in some instances this would be due to a timing issue;
- appreciation was expressed for the hard work of the staff who often had to deal with very difficult situations;
- concern was expressed at the length of time spent in temporary accommodation and it was queried whether this cost more than being in a fixed tenancy property; and
- the quick turnaround of void properties was commended. Figures were requested on the number of properties in Nairn that were paying 50% Council tax due to the house being under repair. Further information would be sought on this and reported back to Mrs B Jarvie.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the information provided on housing performance in the period 1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025.

7. Nairn Academy Associated School Group Overview Foir-shealladh Buidheann Sgoiltean Co-cheangailte Acadamaidh Inbhir Narann

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

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- concern was expressed at the performance of attainment at Millbank Primary School as set out in the table at para 9.1 of the report. Assurance was provided that the position was improving due to the measures that had been put in place by the Collaborative Lead Officer;
- national and local benchmarking across Highland indicated that Nairn was performing well, particularly in respect of Pupil Destinations. However, disappointment was expressed that the most recent data in the table was in respect of 2022/23 and it would be helpful if more up to date data could be released faster;
- it was queried if there was further information available on whether pupils were going onto further education/online courses to re-sit exams that they did not achieve at school;
- it was important that pupils left school with as much potential as possible and the destinations information needed to be more detailed in order to break down barriers and reduce depopulation;
- it was imperative that all school leavers were able to read and write and concern was expressed regarding these figures. It was queried what support was being provided to children to ensure these basic skills were being achieved before they left school to ensure they would be able to progress in employment. It was also highlighted that these figures should indicate a breakdown of school leavers by year group;

- Cawdor Primary School was performing very well and it was queried whether their good practices would be replicated across other schools;
- further information had been sought on whether Rosebank Primary School was including parents in the learning process and whether the maintenance issues had been addressed;
- confirmation was provided that the future school roll forecast had made provision for the new housing at Delnies;
- further information was sought and provided on the formula for Additional Support Learning allocations; and
- further information was sought and provided on the definition of the gradings used in the Standards and Quality reports.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the contents of the report.

8. Bereavement Services – Project Updates **Cunntas às ùr mu sheirbheisean bàis**

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

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- the pre-purchase of lairs was welcomed and there was a need to promote public awareness of this;
- responding to concerns raised regarding capacity at Nairn Cemetery and the new cemetery at Granny Barbour Road, it was explained that Members had previously been advised that Nairn Cemetery had only five years of capacity remaining. However, new areas had since been identified for use following the removal of tress in Nairn Cemetery enabling capacity to be increased to over 10 years; and
- requests were made for general repairs at Nairn Cemetery and assurance was provided that these works would be undertaken.

Thereafter, the Committee **NOTED** the:-

- i. current capacities and progress of burial ground extensions in the Nairnshire area; and
- ii. challenges with identifying and developing suitable land for burial ground development.

9. Place Planning Update: Our Nairnshire – Local Place Plan (LPP) **Cunntas às Ùr mu Phlanadh Àite: Ar Siorrachd Inbhir Narann – Plana Àite Ionadail**

There had been circulated Report No NC/13/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive - Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- appreciation was expressed to officers for bringing the Plan to fruition;
- although there were several good points within the Plan, disappointment was expressed that some Member responses to the statutory consultation had not been included and consequently Kingsteps Quarry had not been included in the Plan. In response to a question, it was clarified that any

amendments to the Local Place Plan would be at the discretion of the community trust that had led the preparation of the document;

- it was hoped that the local groups would use the Plan as evidence for development proposals to be brought forward for Nairnshire in the future;
- disappointment was expressed at the high cost to prepare the Plan;
- concern was raised that the Plan would be regarded as a statutory document, which it was not (outside of its role as a potential material consideration in the Planning system), and it was therefore felt that it should only be noted by the Committee;
- the Plan should be adopted as one source of evidence and it was therefore proposed that recommendation iii should be amended to read as follows – ***agree to adopt the plan as one source of evidence of community aspiration, to inform wider decision making about spatial planning, service delivery, options for asset management, development and investment towards the continuous improvement and wellbeing of the Nairn and Cawdor Ward. We look forward to any community groups, either currently or newly formed, to take forward any projects for the enhancement of the ward*** – and this was supported by Members; and
- this was Nairn's Plan and ownership of the document should come from the community. Anyone could take any part of the Plan forward and should be encouraged and supported to do so.

Thereafter, the Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** Our Nairnshire is both a Local Place Plan under national planning legislation and an Area Place Plan, in line with Highland's Place Based Framework for Planning and Investment in Communities (HC/34/21);
- ii. **NOTED** that when validated and registered as a Local Place Plan by Highland Council's Development Plans Team, the Plan would be taken into account as a source of evidence, alongside other sources of evidence, in preparation of the Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP) - required by the Planning (Scotland) Act 2019; and
- iii. **AGREED** to adopt the plan as one source of evidence of community aspiration, to inform wider decision making about spatial planning, service delivery, options for asset management, development and investment towards the continuous improvement and wellbeing of the Nairn and Cawdor Ward. We look forward to any community groups, either currently or newly formed, to take forward any projects for the enhancement of the ward.

10. Minutes Geàrr-chunntas

The Committee **NOTED** Minutes of the Meeting of the Nairnshire Committee held on 10 February 2025 which were approved by the Council on 27 March 2025.

The meeting was concluded at 12.00pm.