

The Highland Council

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

Present:

Mr L Fraser

Ms B Jarvie

Mr M Green

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

Item 5b – Mr L Fraser

3. Good News Naidheachdan Matha

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

- Nairn Golf Club were to host a Women's Amateur Golf Championship, and it was anticipated the Nairn hotels, bars and shops would benefit greatly from this event;
- Nairn Football Club had reached the final of the Domino Regional Cup which was due to be held on the 31 May 2025 in Burghead against Coulter;
- service points had extended their opening hours, which would be published on the council website. Signage would provide notification of the new operating hours which commenced on the 2 June 2025;
- a presentation had been provided by the Welfare Support Team to introduce new staff based at the Court House to assist people in maximising the benefits they were entitled to;

- Nairn Poor Fund had £800,000 available. Two more staff had been appointed to the team to help people with all types of debt management;
- Nairnshire Community Planning Partnership had been extended for a further 2 years. Key improvements included regular meetings at which a good engagement had been achieved;
- the Whole Family team had grants available up to £10,000 which closed on the 30 May 2025. This was highlighted as under claimed in the Nairn area.
- Ros Philip, District Manager for Nairn Community Hospital had retired. Kara McNaught was her successor and attended the last District Planning Meeting;
- as of 23 May 2025, in the Delnies area, speed limits had been moved as agreed by South Planning Application Committee on the 18 June 2024. The “Welcome to Nairn” signs had now been re-erected;
- paths in King Steps Quarry were being improved. This had not been funded from the Community Regeneration Fund, but had been funded from another source;
- traffic calming measures had been introduced from 30mph down to 20mph on the A96 leading to Forres Road in Nairn; and
- the Queenspark Residents Group were to host a picnic in Riverside Park in June. Donations to raffles and tombolas were welcomed.

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:

- the team at the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) were administering disbursements, however it was recognised £2000 was not a lot of money and this would increase eventually with procedures for how it was utilised put in place; and
- confirmation was requested on how the Nairn Poor Fund and Childrens Fund, of which 50% of these funds were capital, were tied up. Comments were made regarding the small amount of money which would be given over to CAB.

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 (CAB) administer the funds as part of the ‘Peoples Pot’ currently administered by CAB.

5. Nairn Common Good Fund

(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 the effort of bringing forward the proposals in the annual review highlighting the top levels of transparency and professionalism to both operation and working of all aspects of the funds opening links for the wider use;
- the Team Hamish project was discussed, and it was accepted there would be a need for a planned electric power point installation as progress was made with the project. During discussion it was highlighted, with some concerns, that the area was being considered a performance space. Members reiterated the intended use of the Team Hamish space was for contemplation and not a concert venue. Approaches had been made to Highland Council regarding it being used as a performance venue and it was considered signage should be erected directing the public where to go with such queries. Concerns were also raised around assurances which were given to local residents at the time over performances taking place within the space and to avoid conflict with local residents greater communication was needed;
- Members discussed the position of the Common Good Development Officer and the scale of operations which common good were involved in. Members commended the work evidencing the benefit of having a Development Officer in place who understood the local community;
- clarity was sought on the progress with the next stage of the Riverside Development Plan, querying whether this was just allocated to Riverside Park or whether it encompassed the whole stretch of river from the harbour; and
- Members talked to the Common Good Engagement Group conducting a worthwhile exercise and playing a valuable role in achieving feedback from the local community. This included support of the Nairn Community and creation of the Hardship fund. Members talked of being keen to continue in the revised format of the group. Questions were raised around what changes were being made around agenda items being brought to the Community Planning Partnership. It was considered the Community Planning Partnership did not involve the Nairn Community but were discussed by organisations which were peripheral to Nairn. Members commented on the size of the meetings involving upwards of 120 attendees in often lengthy meetings. It was agreed meeting invites should be Nairn focussed with people who benefit the area.

Thereafter the Committee:

- i. **NOTED** 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. **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.

(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 as a member of the Nairn Games Committee in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, he left the meeting for 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 being done;
- Nairn Games were considered important to the community and more games committee members would be welcomed; and
- Nairn Common Good sponsors the event.

The Committee **AGREED** £12,000 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 had been circulated Report No NC/10/25 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion the following main points were raised:

- clarification was sought on the cases of antisocial behaviour and the report needed revisited;
- comments were made regarding the rent arrears stating it was unfortunate this had not reduced to a reasonable standard;
- discussion took place around the time spent in temporary accommodation. It was queried whether the cost was more than someone in a rented property; and
- figures were requested on how many empty council houses in Nairn were paying half council tax and needed renovation. The Empty Homes Officer was to feedback this information to Members.

The Committee thereafter **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:

- reference was made to underperformance in relation to schools in the area with more damaging demographics and questions being asked as to whether resources were available to address these issues;
- discussion took place around destination of pupils and there was concern raised around the benefit that pupils gained from education. Disappointment was expressed by Members regarding the table looking at the most recent data which was acknowledged was for 2022/23, and getting information for the last academic year would be helpful. It was emphasised positive destinations data was important as it was reported that less than a quarter of pupils went into employment. It was asked whether pupils were going onto further education, online courses or re-sitting exams which they had not passed in school;
- it was queried whether some pupils' confidence was lost in school and it highlighted the importance of pupils leaving with as much potential as they could. This should be tracked;
- concern was expressed over school leavers only achieving 83% for numeracy and literacy skills. It was questioned what support was available for these children highlighting the need to ensure every child had the basic skills; and
- it was reported Cawdor Primary had good achievement reports and it was questioned whether their system should be used by other schools.

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:

- discussion took place around getting information into the public domain regarding the prepurchase of a burial plot;
- it was noted the current plot capacity would only last around 10 years; and
- emphasis was placed on the required maintenance around the burial ground including repairs to the top fence, as well as the gate with graffiti and a general tidy up being required.

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 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:

- it was acknowledged there were good points made in the plan and ways forward for Nairnshire, however, disappointment was expressed regarding the statutory consultation with Elected Members. Members points had not been acknowledged, despite those comments being used on social media;
- concerns were raised the Local Place Plan would be looked on as statutory;
- it was suggested adopting the plan as one element of evidence; and
- emphasis was placed on ownership of the project coming from the community.

The Committee:

- 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);
- NOTED** that when validated and registered as a Local Place Plan by Highland Council's Development Plans Team, the Plan will 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
- AGREED** to adopt the plan as a source of evidence of community aspiration, to inform wider decision making about spatial planning, service delivery, options for asset management, development and investment for 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 concluded at 12:00pm.