

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday, 4 December 2025 at 1.05pm.

Present:

Highland Council

Mr I Brown (Remote)

Ms K MacLean (Remote)

Mrs J Hendry

Officials in Attendance

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager Inverness & South
Ms G MacPherson, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Ms K Rait, Inverness Events Manager (Independent sub-contractor)
Ms E Harrison, Visit Inverness Loch Ness (Remote)
Ms Margaret Laws, Inverness BID Deputy Manager (Remote)

Mrs J Hendry in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair and Mr R MacKintosh.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** the Minutes of the previous Meeting held on 11 September 2025.

4. Exclusion of the Public

The Working Group **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of the following items on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 6 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 7A of the Act.

5. City Area Community Events Programme 2025/26

The Events Manager gave a presentation on the plans for the Community Events Programme extending to 31 March 2026 and beyond.

Bonfire Night

Despite the wet weather, there had been a high turnout and the event had been an overall success. There had been one complaint received in terms of parking.

Inverness International Blues Festival

Tickets for the event, due to be held on Saturday 28 March 2026, were now on sale and the website was live. The uptake of early bird tickets was encouraging.

An update was provided in terms of sponsorship, advertising and marketing. Members were interested in the geographic reach of the event and an insight into this could be provided post-event. There had already been a number of expressions of interest from prospective traders and the Working Group looked forward to an update at the next meeting.

Event Proposal

The Events Manager had been contacted regarding a proposed, and exciting, free event to be held in Inverness next year. Details of the event, which would be organised by an external party, being the Royal Air Force and utilising Northern Meeting Park potentially, were shared with the Working Group. The event organiser had requested agreement in writing to support their event and to provide specific funding.

A detailed discussion took place which included the projected cost to the Council (Inverness Common Good Fund), and this was said to be minimal. However, with next year's budget not yet confirmed, the Working Group did not have the capacity to confirm their support and sought assurance from the Senior Community Development Manager.

Thereafter, the Working Group **AGREED in principle** to provide the necessary support estimated between £15k and £20k, subject to there being sufficient funds in the 2026/27 Events and Festivals budget.

6. Budget – Update – 2025/26

The Working Group discussed sharing the breakdown of costs with the City of Inverness Area Committee. It was felt that sharing costs before an event had taken place was not beneficial as budget positions could change right up to the event, particularly those with ticket sales on the day. The meeting was open to all Members should they want additional information.

The Working Group **NOTED** the budget position.

7. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday, 22 January 2026 at 10am.

Meeting ended at 2.15pm

