

## The Highland Council

### City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in Committee Room 3, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 27 April 2026 at 9.30 am.

#### **Present:**

Mr C Balance	Ms K MacLean
Mr M Cameron	Mr D McDonald
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair	Mrs M Reid
Mr A Graham (Chair)	Mrs T Robertson (sub for Mr A Christie)
Dr M Gregson	
Mrs I MacKenzie	

#### **Non-Members also present:**

Mr K Gowans

#### **In attendance:**

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South  
 Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager, Inverness and South  
 Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management)  
 Mr J Kelman, Programme Manager (Property)  
 Ms P Betts, Common Good Fund Officer  
 Mr S Taylor, Civic and Facilities Team Leader  
 Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Senior Community Development Manager's Office  
 Ms F MacBain, Senior Committee Officer

**Mr A Graham in the Chair  
 (except the applications detailed at Item 2  
 for which Mr C Ballance was in the Chair)**

#### **1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Mr D Macpherson and Mr A Christie.

#### **2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following declarations of interest:-

Mr A Graham – applications by Meur Inbhir Nis - An Comunn Gàidhealach, Eadarainn Gaelic Choir, and the Northern Meeting Charitable Piping Trust.

#### **3. Inverness Common Good Fund – Common Good Consultation Outcome: Change of Use Proposal at Land at Stadium Road, East Longman, Inverness**

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/05/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Corporate and the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

During discussion, the application was considered a beneficial use of land that would otherwise remain unused. The low number of consultation respondents was disappointing despite all appropriate guidance being followed. It was requested that the concerns raised about biodiversity on the site be taken into consideration.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the statutory consultation process and its outcome as detailed in sections 6-8 and Appendices 1 and 2 of the report;
- ii. **NOTED** the representations received, together with the Council's responses as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report, taking them into account in the decision-making process, having due regard to the views of the inhabitants of the former Burgh of Inverness;
- iii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that, having regard to the representations received and the best interests of the Inverness Common Good Fund, the proposal should be **APPROVED**, *subject to appropriate consideration being given to the biodiversity issues raised during the consultation process*; and
- iv. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee that it approve the publication of the Council's responses to the representations, as set out in Appendix 2, on the Council's website.

#### 4. Exclusion of the Public

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** that under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of **Items 6 to 13** 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, but that Item 5 be taken in public.

#### 5. Inverness Common Good Fund - Inverness Town House Facilities – Update and Repurposing

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/06/26 by the Assistant Chief Executive – Place.

The Programme Manager (Property) gave a presentation which included some of the challenges with the internal layout of the Town House in relation to the use of the main hall and the storage of tables and chairs for events, and a suggested solution, which involved the rationale behind the proposal to repurpose the Members' lounge for use as a storage area. He outlined other options and recommendations for the redesign of the building to achieve best value, with particular attention being drawn to the civic toilets, which were currently insufficient for a modern commercial building.

The Chair suggested that a site visit be undertaken to which all Members of the City of Inverness and Area Committee be invited prior to any decision being made. Further issues raised during discussion included the following:

- concern was expressed that there were no Members on the Town House Project Board, with attention drawn to the importance of early engagement with Members. Assurance was provided that Members would be consulted in future and that the

full membership and activities of the Project Board would be circulated to the Sub Committee;

- in relation to the storage of tables and chairs for events in the main hall, there had previously been storage in the area where the lift had been installed. The space beneath the stage in the main hall was not suitable. The hiring of tables and chairs for events was suggested as an option, though some of the challenges with this were explained;
- consideration was given to the locations, uses and refurbishment requirements of the various toilets in the Town House, with attention drawn to the need for additional toilets for large events being held in the main hall;
- the possible use of an area on the ground floor as a retail unit, with an external door, was considered, as was the reconfiguration of the finance office space. The input of the Council's income generation team was suggested;
- the heritage value of the Members' lounge was highlighted; and
- any reconfiguration plans to facilitate income generation should be accompanied by a business case.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the governance in place in respect of the development of the Town House established by the City of Inverness Area Committee;
- ii. **NOTED** the update provided regarding potential projects to be taken through the Project Programme Board and reported to the City of Inverness Area Committee; and
- iii. **AGREED to DEFER** further consideration of the matter pending the arrangement of a site visit to the Town House, to which all Members of the City of Inverness and Area Committee be invited.

## 6. Inverness Common Good Fund – Requests for Civic Hospitality 2026/27

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/07/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. A copy of the applications and any supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint in Booklet A.

Following discussion on the merits or otherwise of each application, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points, the Sub-Committee determined the applications for civic hospitality as follows:-

Organisation: Clan Chattan Association  
Event: Clan Chattan Association 300th Anniversary  
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)  
Cost: £4,870.88  
Decision: £4,870.88 **APPROVED**

Organisation: The Royal Caledonian Club  
Event: USA Ladies Curling Tour 2026  
Venue: Kingsmills Hotel  
Cost: Financial contribution towards event being hosted at the Kingsmills Hotel  
Decision: £1,000 **APPROVED**

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** that applicants remained responsible for their own costs and might be held liable for the whole costs of the event if it was cancelled due to their own act or omission;
- ii. **NOTED** that the cost of civic events required continued monitoring and decisions might have to be taken to prioritise events; and
- iii. **AGREED** to determine the applications listed in Appendix 2 of the report as detailed above.

## 7. Inverness Common Good Fund - Civic Hospitality Recurring Annual Events

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/08/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South.

During discussion, attention was drawn to the closure of the Poppy Scotland office in Inverness and the importance of supported events being localised to the City of Inverness. It was noted that, to date, no application had been made for a specific event in Inverness in 2026-27 but Members wished to add a proviso to any future application for support for a civic event that it be appropriately focused on supporting the local veteran community in Inverness, in keeping with the terms of the Inverness Common Good Fund.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the recurring events list as circulated, *subject to the proviso detailed in relation to Poppy Scotland*; and
- ii. **APPROVED** the events in principle and **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Senior Community Development Officer, Inverness and South, in consultation with the Chair of the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee and the Provost, to approve the necessary expenditure in 2026/27.

## 8. Inverness Common Good Fund – Grant Monitoring and Requests for Financial Assistance 2026/27

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/09/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. A copy of the applications and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint in Booklets B, C, D, E, F, G & H.

Following discussion on the merits or otherwise of each application, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points, the Sub-Committee determined the applications for financial assistance as follows:-

### Total Funds Committed

- clarification was sought and provided in relation to the percentages of grants that were held back until project evaluation forms had been submitted, and in relation to the payment dates detailed. In theory there was a six-month period during which grants were expected to be drawn down, but in practice this was considered with flexibility due to the many valid reasons a project could be delayed. Members pointed out that persistent postponement of grant drawdown in one financial year meant that those funds could have been allocated to other projects. It was noted that once funds were allocated, if they were not drawn

down, they would not be returned to the Sub Committee for redistribution but added into reserves. Regular updates on delayed projects should be provided by applicants, and added to the report;

- it was requested that dates be added to the application update comments reported;
- requests should be sent to The Camanachd Association and to Merkinch LNR for updates on their projects, noting the delays in their grants being drawn down; and
- in relation to the Development of a Conference Bureau for Inverness Area by Visit Inverness Loch Ness, a report on mutually beneficial activities was being worked on and would come to the Sub Committee in due course.

### **Booklet B – Applications £10,000 and under – Poverty & Inequality**

Assurance was sought and provided that Members were content with the categorisation of applications, following discussion having taken place over the rationale for the Planefield Bowling Club application being included under the Poverty and Inequality budget.

Applicant: Planefield Road Bowling Club  
Project/activity: Upgrade of clubhouse and toilets  
Amount requested: £5,500  
Decision: £5,500 **APPROVED**

Applicant: Digital Access Network CIC  
Project/activity: Digital confidence support for accessing essential services in Inverness  
Amount requested: £8,500  
Decision: **REFUSED** on the grounds that the detail of the application was insufficient to provide adequate community benefit.

Applicant: Balloan Football Club  
Project/activity: Football team trip to Castelo-de-Vide 2026  
Amount requested: £5,000  
Decision: £5,000 **APPROVED**

Applicant: The Oxygen Works  
Project/activity: Supporting the Inverness community through land rent and wellbeing groups  
Amount requested: £9,750  
Decision: **DEFERRED** on the basis that an update on their business model and plan was required, to include information on their beneficiaries.

Applicant: Highland Pride SCIO  
Project/activity: Pride in the Highlands 2026  
Amount requested: £7,000

Mr A Graham, seconded by Ms G Campbell-Sinclair, **MOVED** that the Sub-Committee approve the application as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr D McDonald, seconded by Mrs T Robertson, moved that only 50% of the amount requested be awarded on the grounds that some non-pride

events were to be put on hold, thus reducing inclusivity which was contrary to the terms of the Fund.

On a vote being taken, there were 7 votes for the **MOTION** and 3 votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with no abstentions. The **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Ms K MacLean, Mrs M Reid.

**For the Amendment:**

Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D McDonald, Mrs T Robertson

Decision: £7,000 **APPROVED**

Applicant: Highland Blindcraft

Project/activity: Replacement compressor

Amount requested: £8,400

Decision: £4,200 **APPROVED** on the grounds that a 50% contribution was adequate given the commercial nature of the project. The appropriate disposal of any waste should be specified in the grant letter.

Applicant: Red Chair Highland CIC

Project/activity: Connecting Communities Inverness

Amount requested: £7,600

Decision: £7,600 **APPROVED**, subject to the applicant being informed that the grant was a one-off for this project and that recurring funding was not in keeping with the terms of the Common Good Fund

Applicant: James Support Group

Project/activity: Suicide Bereavement Support Group

Amount requested: £5,092

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, **MOVED** that the Sub-Committee approve the application as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr D McDonald, seconded by Dr M Gregson, moved that 50% of the amount be approved on the grounds that some of the ongoing costs should not be funded.

On a vote being taken, there were 2 votes for the **MOTION** and 8 votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with no abstentions. The **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:**

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mr A Graham

**For the Amendment:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Dr M Gregson, Mrs I MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr D McDonald, Mrs M Reid, Mrs T Robertson

Decision: £2546 **APPROVED**

Applicant: Ar Gàradh CIC

Project/activity: Healing Garden Workshops

Amount requested: £9,750

Decision: £4,875 **APPROVED** on the grounds that the funding of staffing related expenses such as transport and catering were not in keeping with the terms of the Common Good Fund.

Applicant: UK Parents Rising Beyond Grief

Project/activity: Community bereavement support for parents in Inverness

Amount requested: £6,000

Decision: £3,000 **APPROVED** on the basis that the project was similar to other applications and that 100% funding would not be in keeping with the terms of the Common Good Fund

### **Booklet C – Applications over £10,000 – Poverty & Inequality**

Applicant: Inverness Sea Cadets

Project/activity: Replacement Minibus

Amount requested: £15,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** in full.

Applicant: Ness Bank Church

Project/activity: Sanctuary Project

Amount requested: £30,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** in full

During discussion, assurance was sought and provided that when project costs were lower than detailed in the application, the Sub Committee would be invited to re-consider the amount of funding allocated.

### **Booklet D – Applications £10,000 and under – Other**

Applicant: Highland Hospice

Project/activity: Falcon Square Civic Christmas Tree/Light Up the Highlands

Amount requested: £2,600

Decision: £2,600 **APPROVED**

**Declaration of Interest - Mr A Graham declared an interest in this application having strong local Gaelic connections, and left the meeting during its consideration. Mr C Ballance took the Chair in his absence.**

Applicant: Meur Inbhir Nis - An Comunn Gàidhealach (Inverness Branch)

Project/activity: Inverness Local Mod 2026

Amount requested: £7,500

Decision: £7,500 **APPROVED**

**Declaration of Interest - Mr A Graham declared an interest in this application having strong local Gaelic connections, and left the meeting during its consideration. Mr C Ballance took the Chair in his absence.**

Applicant: Eadarainn Gaelic Choir  
Project/activity: Assistance towards the Inverness Members of the Choir attending the Royal Nation Mod in Glasgow 2026  
Amount requested: £4,000  
Decision: £4,000 **APPROVED**

Applicant: Chamber Music Tours Scotland  
Project/activity: Inverness Piano Recitals series 2026/27  
Amount requested: £3,100  
Decision: £3,100 **APPROVED**

Applicant: High Life Highland  
Project/activity: Toilet and welfare facilities – Northern Meeting Park  
Amount requested: £1,000  
Decision: **REFUSED** on the grounds that the facilities detailed in the application were not the responsibility of the Common Good Fund

Applicant: City of Inverness Pipe Band  
Project/activity: Community Pipe Band  
Amount requested: £8,000  
Decision: £8,000 **APPROVED**, and the Sub Committee further **AGREED** that details of the membership of the Pipe Band be circulated to the Sub Committee Members by the Senior Community Development Manager.

#### **Booklet E – Applications over £10,000 - Other**

Applicant: Inverness Fringe Limited  
Project/activity: Inverness Fringe Festival 2026  
Amount requested: £15,000  
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that *up to* £15,000 be **APPROVED**, subject to:  
i. expenditure on the project being monitored to ensure it was as detailed in the application; and  
ii. the project receiving the Creative Scotland funding that had been applied for.

Applicant: Inverness Symphony Orchestra  
Project/activity: Music enjoyment for citizens of Inverness  
Amount requested: £10,241  
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that £9,800 be **APPROVED** on the grounds that this sum used up the remaining available funds in this category.

#### **Booklet F – Conference Funding**

**Declaration of Interest - Mr A Graham declared an interest in this application as a trustee of the Northern Meeting Charitable Piping Trust Committee, and left the meeting during its consideration. Mr C Ballance took the Chair in his absence.**

Applicant: Northern Meeting Charitable Piping Trust  
Project/activity: Northern Meeting Solo Piping Competition 2026  
Amount requested: £9,000  
Decision: £9,000 **APPROVED**

Applicant: World Ultra Corporation Ltd (Trading as Ultra X)

Project/activity: Ultra X Scotland 2026

Amount requested: £10,000

Decision: **REFUSED** on the grounds that it was a commercial venture with insufficient justification for benefit of the community and the need for funding had not been demonstrated.

### **Booklet G – Partnership Working**

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Business Tourism within Inverness and Loch Ness

Amount requested: £20,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **REFUSED** on the grounds that it did not clearly demonstrate quantifiable benefits to the level expected of this type of application.

Applicant: Inverness BID

Project/activity: Inverness City Centre Gift Card

Amount requested: £9,500

Decision: **REFUSED** on the grounds that the project had not demonstrated adequate sustainability.

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Food and Drink Tourism within Inverness and Loch Ness

Amount requested: £9,500

Mr A Graham, seconded by Mrs M Reid, **MOVED** that the Sub-Committee approve 50% of the requested award to fund the Taste of the Highlands 2027 project.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, moved that the application be refused on the grounds of its failure to demonstrate adequate additionality.

On a vote being taken, there were 3 votes for the **MOTION** and 6 votes for the **AMENDMENT**, with one abstention. The **AMENDMENT** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

**For the Motion:** Mr A Graham, Dr M Gregson, Mrs M Reid

**For the Amendment:**

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs I MacKenzie, Ms K MacLean, Mr D McDonald

Decision: **REFUSED** on the grounds of its failure to demonstrate adequate additionality.

### **Booklet H – Other Properties**

Applicant: Inverness Angling Club

Project/activity: Financial support for the continuing management of the ICGF Town Fishings

Amount requested: £9,500

Decision: £9,500 **APPROVED**

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the position in relation to current expenditure and existing grants;
- ii. **AGREED** to determine the applications for up to and including £10,000 as detailed above; and
- iii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 18 May 2026, that the applications for more than £10,000 be determined as detailed above.

#### **9. Inverness Common Good Fund - Internal Application - Town House Car Park**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the intended Internal Application from the Senior Community Development Manager (Inverness & South) on adjustments to the use of the Town House car park would be reported to a future meeting.

#### **10. Inverness Common Good Fund - Inverness Athletic – Repurposing of Grant**

The Sub-Committee was invited to consider a request from Inverness Athletic to change the use of the grant approved in August 2025.

The Sub-Committee **APPROVED** the change of use.

#### **11. Inverness Common Good Fund – Operation Respect Festive 2025**

There had been circulated an Evaluation Report for Operation Respect Festive 2025.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the Evaluation Report.

#### **12. Inverness Common Good Fund – Fire Brigade Union Red Plaque to Commemorate George MacDougall**

There had been circulated a letter received from representatives of the Fire Brigades Union summarising a request to install a Red Plaque at the former Fire Station to the rear of the Town House in commemoration of the death of a fire fighter whilst on duty at the former Fire Station.

Members were informed that that there were currently no commemorative plaques on the Town House, and that the installation would create a precedent for future requests. Potential alternative sites included the Workers Memorial on the Riverside and at Inverness Fire Station. It was highlighted that, should Members wish to proceed with the Town House option, an application for Listed Building Consent would be required.

During discussion, Members expressed sympathy for the request but noted that the Fire Station already held commemorative plaques, and the Town House did not. It was likely that the installation of a plaque would create a precedent for future similar requests, which would be challenging to assess, and which might not be considered appropriate on an historic Listed Building such as the Town House.

The Sub-Committee **REFUSED** the request.

### 13. Inverness Common Good Fund Grants - Evaluation Forms

There had been circulated, and were **NOTED**, Evaluation Forms submitted by applicants on completion of their projects.

### 14. Inverness Common Good Fund – Homologation and Noting

The following applications/requests had been approved by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, in consultation with the Sub-Committee where appropriate, subject to homologation or noting at the next available Sub-Committee meeting:-

#### a. Partnerships for Wellbeing

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award a grant of £5,250 from the 2025/26 Poverty and Inequality Budget towards the Inverness Walking & Wheeling Festival 2026.

#### b. Civic Hospitality Requests

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award the following Civic Hospitality Requests:-

- i. Scottish Highland & Island and Moray Chinese Association - £750 contribution towards a Celebration of the Year of the Horse;
- ii. Highland Hospice – Celebration Event – Recognition of fundraising by volunteers - £2,304.48;
- iii. Victorian Market Railway Launch - £3,460 Contribution

#### c. Canadian Massed Pipes and Drums

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that this event would not now be taking place in 2026 and had been postponed to 2027.

#### d. Recurring Civic Hospitality Requests

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the approval of the following events on the Recurring List:-

- Armed Forces Day
- Northern Meeting Piping Competitions

#### e. Town House Whisky

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the purchase of Town House Whisky at a cost of £4,518.24 including VAT.

#### f. Civic Lighting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Civic Lighting requests for the period February 2026 to April 2026:-

## **Inverness Town House and Ness Bridge**

- Kidney Cancer Awareness Week
- Chinese New Year – Year of the Horse
- Endometriosis Awareness
- 2026 Autoimmune Awareness Month
- International Long Covid Awareness Day
- Highland Hospice
- Epilepsy Scotland
- Blood Cancer Awareness Month

### **g. Hall Lets**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following hall lets during the period November 2025 – March 2026:-

- Fairtrade Coffee Morning – 29 November 2025 - £750
- Sixty Years Strong – 27 November 2025 - £600
- Safe Strong Free – 5 March 2026 - £450
- Inverness District Council 30th Anniversary – 31 March 2026 - £60

### **15. Date of Next Meeting**

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 3 August 2026 at 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 2.55pm