

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee

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

Present:

Mr C Ballance	Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)
Mr M Cameron	Ms K MacLean (remote)
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remote)	Mr D McDonald
Mr A Graham (Chair)	Mrs M Reid
Dr M Gregson	Mrs T Robertson (substitute)

Non-Members also present:

Mr I Brown

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South (remote)
Mr M Greig, Community Development Manager, Inverness and South
Mr S Taylor, Civic and Facilities Team Leader
Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Senior Community Development Manager's Office
Ms M Murray, Principal Committee Officer

Mr A Graham in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Declarations of Interest:-

Item 7: Mr A Graham

Item 8: Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie and Mrs M Reid

The Sub-Committee also **NOTED** the following Transparency Statement:-

Item 8: Mr A Graham

3. Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee Annual Report

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/10/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South.

During discussion, questions were raised regarding the value of the Inverness Common Good Fund and whether the financial positions of the Town House and the Victorian Market were taken into account when setting grant budgets. In response, it was explained that these matters fell within the remit of the City of Inverness Area Committee, and that reports on both the Town House and the Victorian Market would be presented to the Committee on 17 August 2026. In addition, a series of Member workshops on matters relating to the Inverness Common Good Fund and its future strategy would take place in September.

The Chair referred to section 7.2 of the report, which indicated that 76 grants, totalling £538,693, had been awarded in 2025/26, and highlighted that this represented a significant contribution to the local area.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the report prior to it being presented to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 17 August 2026.

4. Exclusion of the Public

In response to a query, it was confirmed that there was no requirement for items 5 and 6 on the agenda to be considered in private.

The Sub-Committee therefore **RESOLVED** that, under Section 50(A) of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973, the public be excluded from the meeting during discussion of **items 7 to 12 only** 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. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness Town House Facilities – Update and Repurposing

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/11/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South and the Programme Manager.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- in response to questions, examples were provided of larger events that had already been able to take place in the Main Hall as a result of the increased capacity; it was confirmed that the temporary arrangement in respect of the Members' Lounge was expected to remain in place for no more than six months; and it was confirmed that the Main Hall partition screen was in storage within the Town House and could be repurposed or reinstated as appropriate;
- it was recognised that a storage area was required on the first floor, as it was not practicable for staff to move the existing furniture used for civic and other dinners up and down the stairs;
- Members did not wish to relinquish the Members' Lounge, one of the principal rooms in the Town House, for storage. However, they were willing to accept the proposed arrangement on a temporary basis to allow all possible options to be explored;
- the Provost of Inverness and Area confirmed that she was happy to make the Provost's Room available to any Member of the City and Inverness Area Committee who required a meeting space within the Town House;

- it was commented that the decision was retrospective, as the Members' Lounge had already been in use as a storage area for several weeks;
- it would be useful to receive an overview of all current users of the Town House building;
- it was queried what arrangements were in place in other similar venues for the moving and storage of furniture; and
- before any expenditure was committed, it would be helpful to receive projections of the additional business anticipated as a result of the increased capacity in the Main Hall. In response, the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, explained that extensive work was taking place to understand the potential of the Main Hall and to put a process in place to assess the profitability of each room. Reassurance was provided that robust data would be presented to Members before any significant investment decisions were taken.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to the temporary repurposing of the Members' Lounge, for a period of no more than six months, in order to utilise the full potential of the Main Hall with the aim of maximising income for the Inverness Common Good Fund, and that a report be brought to the January meeting of the Sub-Committee.

6. Inverness Common Good Fund – Civic Hospitality Procurement Framework

It was confirmed that the Invitation to Tender for the Town House Catering Services had been published on 10 July 2026. It was hoped that the new tender framework would be in place towards the end of the calendar year.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that the Invitation to Tender had been advertised through Public Contracts Scotland, the official national portal for public sector contract opportunities, and that the Award Notice would also be published on the site.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the position.

7. Inverness Common Good Fund – Request for Civic Hospitality 2026/27

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/12/26 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.

During general discussion, Members emphasised the need to be mindful of the cost of civic events and the limited budget remaining. Given the significantly higher cost of civic dinners, it was suggested that civic buffets be utilised wherever possible. However, concern was expressed that there was not always sufficient seating at civic buffets, particularly for older attendees. The possibility of providing seated tables at civic buffets was discussed. However, it was explained that this would greatly reduce the number of attendees that could be accommodated. It was therefore suggested that a blended approach, incorporating as many seated tables as numbers permitted, be adopted.

Detailed discussion then took place 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: Ness Bridge Club

Event: Ness Bridge Club 40th Anniversary

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner/Civic Buffet)

Cost: £5,188.53 for a Civic Dinner or £2,496.53 for a Civic Buffet

Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Buffet for 80 attendees at a cost of £2,496.53.

Organisation: Poppyscotland

Event: 2026 Scottish Poppy Appeal Reception

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)

Cost: £2,305.50

Decision: **APPROVED**

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application as a family member was employed at Inverness Ice Centre and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Mr C Ballance took the Chair for the following application

Organisation: Inverness Ice Centre

Event: Strictly Inverness Celebratory Dinner

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)

Cost: £4,519.03 for a Civic Dinner or £1,878.00 for a Civic Buffet

Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Buffet at a cost of £1,878.00.

Organisation: The Highlands of Scotland Tour Guides Association

Event: Highlands of Scotland Tour Guides 30th Anniversary

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)

Cost: £4,519.53 for a Civic Dinner or £1,878.00 for a Civic Buffet

Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Buffet at a cost of £1,878.00.

Organisation: Inverness Town Twinning

Event: Secondary Pupils from the Marie Therese Gymnasium in Augsburg

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet Lunch)

Cost: £1,485.30

Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Goustevin Scotland

Event: Grand Chapter Inductions Ceremony to induct new members and promote existing

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Reception)

Cost: £2,026.44

Mrs M Reid, seconded by Mr A Graham, **MOVED** that the application be approved as detailed.

As an **AMENDMENT**, Mr M Cameron, seconded by Mr C Ballance, moved that the application be refused on the grounds of insufficient benefit to the former Burgh of Inverness.

On a vote being taken, the **MOTION** received 6 votes and the **AMENDMENT** received 4 votes, with no abstentions. The **MOTION** was therefore **CARRIED**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair, Mrs T Robertson, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mr D McDonald, Mrs M Reid.

For the Amendment:

Mr C Ballance, Mr M Cameron, Dr M Gregson, Ms K MacLean.

Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: The Highland Council

Event: Augsburg 70th Anniversary Celebration

Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)

Cost: £5,188.53 for a Civic Dinner for 65 and £6,534.41 for a Civic Dinner for 85

Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Dinner for 85 attendees at a cost of £6,534.41.

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 continued to increase beyond expected levels and that decisions might need to be taken regarding the prioritisation of events to be supported; and
- iii. **AGREED** to determine the applications listed in Appendix 2 of the report and detailed in Booklet A as detailed above.

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

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/13/26 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 and G.

Prior to consideration of the individual applications, it was confirmed that Members were content with the categorisation of applications. It was also highlighted that the sum of the applications in the Poverty and Inequality category far exceeded the funding available, and it might be necessary to reduce the awards on a pro rata basis to ensure fairness.

Discussion then took place 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:-

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

Transparency Statement: Mrs M Reid declared a connection to the following application on the basis that she had received treatment at The Oxygen Works. However, she was not actively involved in the organisation and, having applied the objective test, did not consider that she had an interest to declare.

Applicant: The Oxygen Works

Project/activity: Supporting the Inverness community through land rent and wellbeing groups

Amount requested: £9,750

Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £6,741, comprising £5200 from the Other Properties budget for the land rent for the next 12 months and £1,541 (£1,950 minus 21%) from the Poverty and Inequality budget for the other costs detailed in the application.

It was further suggested that the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, together with the Leader and Provost of Inverness and Area, meet with representatives of The Oxygen Works to provide advice on fundraising, and that the Highland Third Sector Interface was also a potential source of support.

Applicant: Inshes Community Association

Project/activity: Wheel Park Extension Design Spec and Planning

Amount requested: £3,000

Decision: **APPROVED** an award of £2,370 (£3,000 minus 21%).

Applicant: L'Arche

Project/activity: L'Arche Links

Amount requested: £9,804

Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £3,429 (£4,341, 25% of the project costs, minus 21%).

Applicant: KBE Group Limited

Project/activity: Christmas Elf Light Walk

Amount requested: £8,750

Decision: **DECLINED** on the grounds of insufficient information on the benefits to the general public in the former Burgh of Inverness.

Applicant: Shopmobility Highland SCIO

Project/activity: Shopmobility

Amount requested: £9,000

Decision: **APPROVED** an award of £7,110 (£9,000 minus 21%).

Applicant: Eden Court Highlands

Project/activity: Expanding Horizons

Amount requested: £8,432

Decision: **APPROVED** an award of £6,661 (£8,432 minus 21%).

Applicant: Growing2gether

Project/activity: Early Years Mentoring Programme

Amount requested: £9,992

Decision: **APPROVED** an award of 7,894 (£9,992 minus 21%).

Booklet C – Applications over £10,000 – Poverty and Inequality

Applicant: Isobel Fraser Home

Project/activity: Garden Room

Amount requested: £30,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of a partial award of £15,800 (£20,000 minus 21%).

Transparency Statement: Mr A Graham declared a connection to the following application on the basis that a family member volunteered for New Start Highland. However, having applied the objective test, he did not consider that he had an interest to declare.

Applicant: New Start Highland

Project/activity: New Start Highland Foodbank

Amount requested: £30,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of an award of £30,000 from the Winter Payments budget.

It was further **AGREED** that information on the reason for the increase in the grant requested from £25,000 to £30,000 be provided in the report to the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Applicant: Inverness Foodstuff

Project/activity: Providing dignity for homeless persons in Inverness

Amount requested: £15,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of an award of £11,850 (£15,000 minus 21%).

Applicant: St Columba Church of Scotland

Project/activity: St Columba Community Rooms for South Inverness

Amount requested: £30,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of a partial award of £15,800 (£20,000 minus 21%).

Declaration of Interest: Mrs I MacKenzie declared an interest in the following application as she had a connection with Crown Scout Group and had been in communication with them within the past year and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: 3rd Inverness (Crown) Scout Group

Project/activity: Refurbishment of Scout Hall

Amount requested: £12,750

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL** of an award of £10,073 (£12,750 minus 21%).

At this stage, further discussion took place during which concern was expressed that, as the Poverty and Inequality budget had now been fully allocated, other potential applicants would miss out simply because they had not applied earlier in the financial year. In response to a query regarding projects that did not proceed, it was explained

that, where a grant was withdrawn, the funding currently reverted to the general fund rather than the relevant grants budget. However, the City of Inverness Area Committee could agree to reallocate such funding to the grants budget.

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

Declarations of Interest: The undernoted Members declared an interest in the following application and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed:-

Mr A Graham as he had a long-standing affinity with The Old High Inverness
Mrs I MacKenzie as she had a family connection to The Old High Inverness

Mr C Ballance took the Chair for the following application

It was explained that there was no funding remaining in the Other Grants budget. However, the following application had been received prior to the budget being fully allocated and had therefore been circulated for consideration. Should Members be minded to approve the application, this would be reflected in the Minutes. However, any award would require to be funded from Inverness Common Good Fund reserves, which was a matter for the City of Inverness Area Committee.

Applicant: The Old High Inverness (SCIO)

Project/activity: The Old High Fire Alarms

Amount requested: £9,999

Decision: **DECLINED** on the grounds that there was no funding remaining in the budget.

Booklet E – Conference Funding

Applicant: Highland CIC

Project/activity: The Highland Renewables Sustainable Summit and Highland Renewables Network Exhibition 2026

Amount requested: £10,000

Decision: **DECLINED** on the grounds of insufficient benefit to the residents of the former Burgh of Inverness.

Booklet F – Partnership Working

Applicant: Inverness BID

Project/activity: Inverness City Partnership (In Action) Street Scene (Autumn 2026 and Spring 2027)

Amount requested: £10,005

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

Applicant: Inverness BID

Project/activity: Best Foot Forward – Basics First Project

Amount requested: £10,010

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND:-**

- i. that the requested sum in respect of Activity 1: Northern Meeting Park WC Eight-Week Pilot be **DECLINED** on the grounds that the Northern Meeting Park toilet

- facilities were not a Common Good building, toilet provision was not a Common Good responsibility, and the Inverness Common Good Fund already subsidised toilet provision at the Victorian Market;
- ii. that the request in respect of Activity 2: Public Safety and Defibrillator Provision be **DEFERRED** for more detailed information on costs; and
 - iii. that the requested sum of £1,600 in respect of Activity 3: Public Noticeboards and Civic Information be **APPROVED**.

Booklet G – Town Twinning

Applicant: Inverness Town Twinning Committee

Project/activity: Town Twinning

Amount requested: £750

Decision: **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, the Poverty and Inequality awards having been reduced by 21% to ensure fairness given the budget available;
- iii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 17 August 2026, that the applications for more than £10,000 be determined as detailed above, the Poverty and Inequality awards having been reduced by 21% to ensure fairness given the budget available; and
- iv. **NOTED** that the Poverty and Inequality and Other grant budgets for 2026/27 had no funding remaining to support future grant applications.

9. Inverness Common Good Fund – Inverness Fringe Festival

Suspension of Standing Orders: The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to suspend Standing Order 35 to allow consideration of this item.

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/14/26 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 17 August 2026, that:-

- i. 90% of the agreed funding be released; and
- ii. the condition that the project receive the Creative Scotland funding that had been applied for be removed.

It was further **AGREED** that a more detailed breakdown of the project budget, showing the contribution of the Inverness Common Good Fund, be included in the report to the City of Inverness Area Committee.

10. Inverness Common Good Fund – Attention Magazine 2026 – Remembrance Day Edition

The Sub-Committee was invited to consider the purchase of an advert in the Remembrance Day edition of the Attention Magazine in respect of the City of Inverness's support of the Remembrance Day campaign and the Poppy Appeal.

During discussion, it was suggested that the Inverness Common Good Fund's support of Remembrance Day and Poppy Appeal events should be acknowledged in an article rather than a paid advertisement.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** not to proceed with the purchase of an advert.

11. Inverness Common Good Fund – Evaluation Forms

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

In response to a query regarding the total participants engaged in the Highland Challenge Team – Woodwork Project, the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, confirmed that further information could be sought from Apex Scotland.

12. 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. Safe Strong Free

Declaration of Interest: Mrs I MacKenzie declared an interest in this item as she had a connection to the Safe Strong Free charity and had been in communication with them within the past year and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting for the duration of the item.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award a grant of £1,500 from the Poverty and Inequality Budget towards the Stronger Together Colour Run.

b. Inverness BID – Heart of Inverness (Defibrillators) Project

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to award a grant of £1,465 from the Partnership Working City Destinations Projects Budget towards the Heart of Inverness (Defibrillators) Project.

c. UK PARENTS Rising Beyond Grief

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to agree to the change of use of the grant.

d. Augsburg Sporting Alliance Visit

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the costs of the visits being £9,449, £4,901 under budget.

e. Civic Hospitality Requests

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

- Visitation from Aschaffenburg, Germany - £1,853.03.
- Dan Matheson, Fire Union - £2,091.00.
- Augsburg Visit - £1,170.98.

f. Recurring Civic Hospitality Request

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

- Royal British Legion – agreed £1,400 - £1,300 on Recurring List

g. Town House Quotes

The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, spoke to the health and safety operational decision to upgrade the Town House door entry system at a cost of £15,263 from the Town House Maintenance Budget. It was clarified that, as the decision was operational and had been taken for health and safety reasons, the matter was for noting rather than homologation as indicated on the agenda.

In response to a question, it was explained that, whilst the upgrade of the door entry system did not constitute maintenance in the strict sense, the Town House Maintenance Budget was considered the most appropriate budget as the upgrade was an essential improvement to ensure the safe operation of the building given the number of tenants now accommodated within it. Confirmation was sought, and provided, that the expenditure would be met from the current year's Maintenance Budget and would not result in an overspend.

Members requested that, should significant expenditure require to be presented to the Sub-Committee for homologation in the future, further information be provided at an earlier stage. The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, confirmed that this would be taken on board.

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the health and safety operational decision to upgrade the Town House door entry system at a cost of £15,263 from the Town House Maintenance Budget

h. Civic Lighting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Civic Lighting requests for the period 30 April to 30 July 2026:-

Inverness Town House and Ness Bridge

- International Day of The Midwife
- Fibro
- Lyme Disease Awareness Day
- CSF Leak Association
- Alzheimer Scotland Dementia Awareness Week
- Pride Flag
- World Cup 2026

i. Free Hall Lets

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that there had been no Free Hall Lets during the period March to August 2026.

13. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 26 October 2026 at 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 2.40 pm.