

City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of the meeting of the **Events and Festivals Working Group** held in the Committee Room 1, Highland Council Headquarters, Inverness on Thursday, 5 August 2026 at 10.45am.

Present:

Members of the Working Group

Mr I Brown
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair
Mrs J Hendry
Ms K MacLean

Officials in Attendance

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager Inverness & South
Ms A MacNeill, Senior Corporate Communications Officer
Ms R Ross, Committee Officer

Also in Attendance:

Mr G Johnson, Chair, Inverness BID
Ms K Rait, Inverness Events Manager (Independent sub-contractor)

Mrs J Hendry in the Chair

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Mr R MacKintosh.

2. 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.

3. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest or Transparency Statements.

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** the minutes of the previous meeting held on 30 June 2026

5. City Area Community Events Programme 26/27

The Senior Community Development Manager for Inverness & South and the Inverness Events Manager provided an update on the plans for the Community Events Programme for the period up until 31 March 2027 and beyond, including a report on the Inverness Highland Games and the plans for the up-coming

Bonfire Night celebration.

Inverness Highland Games

Approximately 6,200 day tickets were sold including 4,500 pre-booked tickets, and the evening Ceilidh sold out with 1,000 tickets. There was an increase in total income from the previous year. There had been significant investment in long term infrastructure, including equipment for the sale of merchandise and the bar. Approximately 45 members of staff were on site, which was a significant increase from previous years due to needing additional staff for the sale of merchandise, the bar and the gate. Event Cancellation Insurance had been purchased and, although it was not needed, the adverse weather proceeding the event highlighted the need for cancellation insurance.

Bonfire Night

Planning had commenced for the Bonfire Night celebrations with the intention to have an event similar to the previous year, and, again, there were no plans to have the funfair at the event.

During discussion, the following main points were raised:-

- the success of the Inverness Highland Games was welcomed and thanks were extended to the Inverness Events Manager, the Project Officer and the other staff;
- the success of the marketing for the Highland Games was highlighted and could be evidenced by the number of pre-booked tickets;
- it was suggested that marketing and ticket sales for next year should start early to build on this year's success;
- the importance of long-term investment in the Highland Games was highlighted;
- a Guy competition for local Primary Schools was suggested, and the Senior Community Development Manager undertook to facilitate the Inverness Events Manager to liaise with Education colleagues on this;
- ideas were suggested for entertainment at Bonfire Night, including storytelling, firewalkers, drama groups, dancers and a parade of Guys;
- holding a central free Bonfire Night Event for large numbers of people helped to decrease the number of people holding their own bonfires and fireworks displays, therefore decreasing the risk of injury and wildfires;
- it was suggested that the remaining Events and Festivals budget be used to provide a free Hogmanay celebration in the town centre, and the Senior Community Development Manager undertook to discuss the requirements for this with appropriate agencies, and to provide costs for various options to the next scheduled meeting of the Working Group noting that the Contingency budget was not available for allocation towards costs, with any ICGF funding to be provided from the remaining Community Events core budget; and
- the importance of working with local businesses to deliver a potential Hogmanay celebration was emphasised.

The Working Group **NOTED** the updates.

6. Revenue Monitoring and Outturn Spreadsheet – 2025/26

There had been circulated a revenue monitoring statement as at 31 March 2026 together with a budget outturn report for events held as part of the 2025/26 Community Events Programme. The Senior Community Development Manager provided an update on changes proposed to the format and layout to provide further information.

Following discussion, the Working Group **NOTED** the information provided along with the additional changes to further enhance scrutiny and transparency.

7. Revenue Monitoring Statement 2026/27

There had been circulated a budget forecast spreadsheet showing programmed spend, and there was tabled a revenue monitoring statement showing the current spend for 2026/27.

Following discussion, the Working Group **NOTED** the information provided.

8. Date of Next Meeting

The Working Group **NOTED** that the date of the next meeting would be Thursday 3 September 2026 at 1pm.

The Meeting ended at 12.10pm