

The Highland Council
Nairn Academy - Stakeholder Group
Minute of Meeting No. 10 held on Thursday 30th April
2026 at 6:30pm Via Microsoft Teams.

Attendees:	<u>Highland Council – Members</u> Michael Green – Chair Paul Oldham Barbara Jarvie Laurie Fraser <u>School Representatives</u> Julie MacDonald, Head Teacher, Nairn Academy Sarah Abenheimer, Depute Head Teacher, Nairn Academy <u>Parent Council Representatives</u> Lucy Harding, Nairn Academy Parent Council <u>Community Representatives</u> Graham Stuart, Nairn West & Suburban CC Mandy Lawson, Nairn Place Plan <u>Highland Council – Officials</u> Robert Campbell, Service Lead - Capital Planning & Estate Strategy Susannah Holmes, Programme Manager <u>High Life Highland</u> Simon Swanson, Head of Investment and Programme Management <u>Balfour Beatty</u> Atholl McKay, Portfolio Director	MG PO BJ LF JM SA LH GS ML RC SH SS AM
Apologies:	Finlay MacDonald, Sharon Barrie, David Walker, Lewis Hannah Philip Shannon, Mark Jones, Mark Greig, James Cook, Lisa Campbell, Sarah Bisland, Kirsteen Hotchkiss, Grace Chisholm, Alastair Noble	

Minute:	David Walker	
----------------	--------------	--

Item	Discussion/comment	Action
1	Introduction/recording of the meeting	
1.1	RC noted that the meeting would be recorded to aid with the preparation of the minutes. There were no objections.	
2	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
2.1	RC noted there was an action to contact the Nairn Access Panel. SH confirmed that the Access Panel had raised concerns about the gradient of the path on site which joins the existing footpath and confirmed that the design team and contractor were reviewing this.	
2.2	RC noted that there was a point raised about the ownership of the rugby pitch. SH sent the title check, post meeting, from the Land Register of Scotland to confirm ownership.	
2.3	As there were no objections, MG concluded that the minute was a fair and accurate reflection of the meeting and requested a proposer and a seconder. SA and JM confirmed.	
3	Project Update – Highland Council	
3.1	RC confirmed that works are progressing well on site and the works are being monitored closely. RC noted that it is an ambitious programme, but we are still aiming for handover in July with a go live date in August however the programme is getting tight. The programme will continue to be monitored closely, and an e-mail update will be issued if anything changes. There is also a meeting next week with Ward Members.	
4	Project Update – Balfour Beatty	
4.1	AM provided a project update and shared a number of slides with the group which detailed the progress made on site to date as well as offering updates on work they have done with the school and wider community and apprenticeship numbers.	

4.2	SH noted that the slides did not show many of the pops of colour. AM confirmed externally the pops of colour are still to be installed. PO noted there was an issue with sub-contractors parking in the roads which caused some complaints from residents and asked if this has been resolved. AM confirmed that there was a period of about a week where the car park had to be closed which forced sub-contractors to park elsewhere however parking was then restored on site. The residents have a direct contact with the Balfour Beatty on site Project Manager so any issued can be raised timeously. AM noted that parking off site may be needed towards the end of the project and this was being reviewed. BJ requested a letter to be sent from Balfour Beatty to residents for some pre-warning of any changes to parking arrangements and to reissue the contact numbers. AM confirmed this could be arranged. BJ asked for an update on the grass pitch. SH confirmed it was still an ongoing issue. It is a condition that will need to be discharged as to what the final solution is for the space. The biodiversity requirements have been agreed. BJ asked for an update on acoustic panels in high traffic areas such as dining. SH confirmed that the acoustics have been well modelled and there is a lot of acoustic absorption throughout the building. BJ requested details if the toilets are male or female or unisex (referencing a slide from the Balfour Beatty presentation). SA confirmed that the toilets will not be colour coded. The intention is for the school to designate some toilets as male and female and some non-binary. GS asked whether solar panels will be installed on the roof. SH confirmed that there were no plans to. In general, installing on the roof tends to be avoided to avoid punctuations and the need for access on to the roof. There is an area on site, should funding be confirmed, for solar panels that could be connected into the building in the future, but it is not included in the project. GS asked whether it was ever included. SH confirmed it was not. The project is meeting its energy targets without the requirement of PVs.	
4.3	AM shared a video of recent drone footage of the building and site.	
5	Nairn Academy Update	

5.1	SA offered an update from Nairn Academy with slides detailing progress and played a video with updates from site. There was an issue with the sound and JM confirmed that it would be posted on social media.	
5.2	GS asked about a question from a member of the Culloden Academy Parent Council regarding ASN provision at Nairn Academy and whether it would have an impact on Culloden Academy. SH confirmed that there was a rumour that pupils would not be able to be accommodated at Nairn Academy and would have to go to Culloden Academy, but it was incorrect. ML noted excitement for the move having been a pupil when the school moved into the existing building. SA requested some assistance from Balfour Beatty in digging up the existing time capsule. AM confirmed this could likely be accommodated.	
6	Planning Condition (Area of Demolished Building)	

6.1	RC explained that the Council have been looking at how pitches are currently used in Nairn and the wider Inverness area. Extra pitches in the Inverness area may help take pressure of the synthetic pitch in Nairn. DW has been in contact with Nairn County FC regarding pitch usage and Ronald Gordon (Nairn County FC) has been in touch regarding having a meeting. This is due to be set up and there is a Ward Business Meeting next week where this will be discussed with Members. RC confirmed that this is a planning issue so we will need to resolve it soon. MG requested to be included in the meeting with Ronald Gordon. GS noted that there are a lot of users of the astroturf pitch that are not from Nairn so if there are users from the Inverness side of the area that could use other pitches it would help free up space. GS noted that Nairn County have given feedback and Nairn West & Suburban CC have been ensuring that other sports groups have been contacted such as Nairn Thunderbolts for rugby and shinty clubs. Their impression from dialogue with the sports groups is there is a need for more secure sports provision in Nairn, and the school would seem to be a suitable location for a community hub of sports pitches. GS asked whether the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements could be achieved off site. SH confirmed that it could be, but the requirements have now been met and agreed with planning. It looks like we can fit something alongside the biodiversity now that this area has been confirmed (reduced from previous requirement due to site line boundary change). GS asked how the findings from the consultations with the groups would be presented and whether Sportscotland will be consulted. SH confirmed that Sportscotland are being consulted. Sportscotland recommended the condition. SH confirmed that how the data will be presented to Planning will be reviewed. MG noted that between 2012 and 2017 he was pushing to get Nairn Academy designated as a sports hub and asked whether that is something that could be looked at. SH noted she was not aware of a Sportscotland classification of a sports hub. RC noted it may be more of a concept that encourages centralisation rather than a formal designation. SS noted it was likely more of a concept looking at the whole of the estate and seeing what can be brought in or farmed out to other areas to give a balanced usage of each site across the whole of Highland. It hoped that the sports strategy review will give an oversight of all sports, all usage, all areas. The term hub is more generic but following the review it is hoped that we	RC/DW RC/DW
-----	--	---

	can articulate where the best sports needs are and where the investment needs to be for those sports. RC noted that was something on the Sportscotland website about a community hub network and posted a link in the meeting chat. JM confirmed the sports hub is more of a concept. There is a group between Highlife Highland (HLH) and the local sports clubs promoting things like training, first aid and help with things such as PVGs but this is the ideal opportunity to revisit that with the school and new facilities. GS noted that they got feedback from the community that the rugby club wanted to use the grass pitch but because there is a limited time a grass pitch can be used in a week there was no space for them. Therefore, due to this it needs to be remembered that the grass pitch that is there may have limited use for the community as it is primarily a school pitch. GS asked what the ideas were for the space if it was not going to be used for a grass pitch. SH noted the school were originally keen on a pump track for the space and other ideas have been suggested such as allotments or other facilities that could be used by the community. MG noted that it is important that we draw on all the various strands when we are deciding and we look at capacity and what's required to address any shortages. ML asked if any data could be shared to ensure joined up thinking because there is other work going on to develop a plan for the Riverside area and there is going to be consultancy across the town. The Place Plan was developed from community level up and one of the five strands of work is green spaces and leisure. This is relevant to making sure Nairn has the right recipe for what people need. And if it is not at the school, then we must look at provision in other parts of the town. BJ noted that when Mark Greig was Ward Manager there was going to be an audit of pitches across Nairn and Nairnshire which was not focussed on just football. MG noted it was important to take this opportunity to ensure we could together and that no one missed out of any sport. SH confirmed that DW had looked at some other sports but focussed on football and rugby specifically. As Robert said, the catchment then widened with other facilities coming on board in Inverness.	
7	Date of next meeting	
7.1	MG asked about a site visit. RC confirmed this would be good to get a feel for the layout and scope of the building and asked AM when may be a suitable date noting that it would likely be in the evening.	

	SH noted that the last week before the school breaks up for the summer holiday (week commencing 29 th June) would be a good option and AM confirmed it would be possible. Date to be agreed.	DW/AM
8	AOCB	
8.1	GS noted it would be remiss not to mention potential relocation of Nairn library and whether there is any update on that.	
8.2	As there was no further business, the meeting was concluded.	