

The Highland Council
Inverness City Area Committee
2 June 2015

Agenda Item	8
Report No	CIA/27/15

Ness Islands Management Plan

Report by the Director of Community Services

Summary

This report provides details for the requirement for a Ness Islands Management Plan. The report also identifies the additional resource implications for the Common Good Fund to support the Management Plan.

1. Background

- 1.1 In 2007, following the various improvement works carried out on the Ness Islands a management plan was developed to ensure the area was maintained and managed in an appropriate way.
- 1.2 The Common Good Fund agreed an annual funding allocation to carry out the tasks identified in the management plan.
- 1.3 For information costs for annual maintenance during 2014/15 are shown in the **Appendix** to this report.

2. Updated Management Plan

- 2.1 The management plan has now been developed to bring it up to date with existing maintenance regimes and annualised costs. The new plan will be for three years from 2015–2018 when it will be reviewed again.
- 2.2 Provision for additional tree works has been included.
- 2.3 As the Common Good Fund has responsibility for the bridges and footpaths on the Islands, an additional provision to ensure regular inspections of these has also been included. Bridge inspections are required to be undertaken on a 3 and 9 year frequency by a qualified Consultant Engineer.

3. Resource Implications

- 3.1 A Service Level Agreement for the programme of work will be developed between the Common Good Fund and Community Services to ensure maintenance and management is kept to a suitable standard.
- 3.2 The annual sum for maintenance will increase to £35,000, from the current rate of £27,000. However, if remedial works to bridges are identified following the inspection as referred to in 2.3, it may be necessary to seek additional funding

to resource these depending on the nature of the repairs required and the priority/timescales attached.

- 3.3 A further report will be brought back to the Committee to seek approval for additional funds if identified by the bridge Inspection report.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Note the contents of the Management Plan;
2. Agree the sum of £35,000 from the Common Good Fund for on-going management and maintenance of the Ness Islands; and
3. Note that a further report will be brought back to the Committee should additional resources be required for remedial works to bridges identified by the Inspection Survey.

Designation: Assistant Area Manager

Date: 18 May 2015

Author: Debbie Sutton, Community Services, Inverness

Background Papers: N/A

Appendix One – Costs for Ness Islands Maintenance 2014/15

Community Services work:

Litter collection, emptying bins, bench and gateway feature work and remedial tree work	£13,847
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Additional works:

Halloween Storm Damage	£3,500
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Early March - Felling of large Elm	£1,000
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ISS grass cutting	£2,373
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Power washing	£520
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Electrical test of power supply	£250
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TOTAL	£21,490
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Costs for most recent storm damage in March 2015 were not available due to the new Integra system not being updated with the information.

Ness Islands Management Plan



2015-2018

Contents

1.0	Policy statement	3
2.0	Description of Site	4
2.1	History	4
2.2	Partners	4
3.0	Management of Site	6
3.1	Artists Work	6
3.2	Nigel Ross	6
3.2.1	Maintenance	6
3.2.2	Damage and Repairs	6
3.3	Chris Bailey	7
3.3.1	Maintenance	7
3.3.2	Damage and Repairs	7
3.4	Adam Booth	8
3.4.1	Maintenance	8
3.4.2	Damage and Repairs	8
3.5	Keith Barrett	8
3.5.1	Maintenance	8
3.5.2	Damage and Repairs	9
3.6	Central Arena	9
3.6.1	Booking System for Arena	9
3.6.2	Power Supply Unit	9
3.7	General Maintenance	10
3.8	Tree Management	10
3.9	Staffing	10
3.10	Marketing and Publicity	10
3.11	Protocol for Closing the Islands	11
4.0	Finance and Work Programme	12
4.1	Management Schedule	12
4.2	Project Costs	13
Appendices		
1.0	Map of Area	15
2.0	Abbreviations	16
3.0	Artists Contact Details	17
4.0	Key Holder Checklist	18
5.0	Work Plan	19

1.0 Policy Statement

Originally implemented by The Inverness City Partnership, The Highland Council and greeninverness the Ness Islands management plan was drawn up with regard to recognising the importance of greenspace and wildlife to people living in Inverness. The original management plan was agreed and implemented in 2007. The work completed was to defend sites of interest from development and manage its open spaces with nature conservation in mind.

This updated management plan aims to ensure that the enhancement work at the Ness Islands is continually maintained and managed in the appropriate way. All the artists who were involved in improving the site contributed to the original plan with detailed information about how each of their art works should be maintained.

There is a scheduled plan of maintenance included (appendix 5) to ensure that the Ness Islands continue to be a well used, well maintained scenic area of the City of Inverness.

2.0 Description of Site

Name:	Ness Islands
District:	Ness
Grid Reference:	NH 663 436 GB
Local Planning Authority:	The Highland Council
District:	City of Inverness
Contact:	Town House, High Street, Inverness, IV1 1JJ
Status:	Public Open Space
Public Access:	Open
Public Right of Way:	Great Glen Way

2.1 History

The Ness Islands were purchased by the Council in the early 1800's for the purposes of providing a natural environment for the enjoyment of the people of Inverness, as part of a wider area including Bught Park and Whin Island they formed a public amenity for recreation and health. They were also recognised as a tourist attraction.

Their natural heritage value lies in their importance as a part of a natural corridor between Loch Ness and the Moray Firth, the wide range of mature trees, an interesting range of birds and fish, and a range of mammals which include bats and otter activity.

In October 2005 consultation took place with over 100 public users through on site sampling questionnaires and self completion questionnaires at local facilities. A work shop was also undertaken with school groups. The consultation key findings then developed into a number of different improvement works for the site. These improvements included a number of works by different artists; to create a central arena area, new sculpted benches, sculpted gateway features and new and improved balustrades at two bridges. There was also work done to improve the footpaths, replace litter and dog faeces bins, install new lighting and new signage for the area.

For a map of the area please see appendix 1.

2.2 Partners

The Highland Council – the islands are owned by the Common Good Fund and managed by Members of the Inverness City Committee, THC. Day to day management is through Community Services, THC.

Inverness City Partnership – was the lead partner regarding the development of the Islands, as part of a wider series of strategies for the development of the city, including a riverside plan. ICP lead partner was THC and included Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Inverness and East Highland (HIEIEH).

Great Glen Way Long Distance Routes – this runs through the Islands, near to its start/end at Inverness Castle.

Step it Up Highland/Paths for All – and local walking groups, including Highland Disabled Ramblers.

Local Primary Schools – who use the islands for activities and recreation.

Scottish Natural Heritage – have an interest in the islands for their biodiversity and their use as an educational resource.

RSPB – mentioned as one of the 50 best places for Highland bird watching in their recent publication.

Tree Climbing Scotland – carry out various tree climbing events in the Islands with various groups including school children.

Also the following groups:

Cyclists, including Highland Cyclists Trust
Inverness West Community Council
Inverness Bat Group
Inverness Anglers Club
Inverness Civic Trust
Inverness History Society
Inverness Heritage Trust
Local Residents
Boots and Paddles

3.0 Management of Site

As owners of the land, the Common Good Fund is responsible for the management and maintenance of the site. Community Services have a service level agreement with the Common Good Fund and this will be reviewed to incorporate the scheduled maintenance and management identified in this plan.

3.1 Artists Work

There are specific maintenance requirement and damage repair recommendations for each of the artist's works. A full list of the artists contact details is available in appendix 3.

3.2 Nigel Ross – Benches



3.2.1 Maintenance:

8 Sculptured benches and one picnic table and bench set

To maintain a naturally weathered appearance (i.e. going to silver grey) they should be treated with a clear wood preservative once a year and during a dry spell. The surfaces of the pieces should be inspected for any roughness that might occur as the timber becomes seasoned. A light rub down with course sandpaper should be sufficient to smooth this, or a surform wood rasp if necessary. Ideally this could be carried annually. This should be a quick operation as most pieces should be ok. It is a precaution.

The pieces could be treated annually with a clear fungicide preservative. This should be carried out during a dry spell when the timber has seasoned and therefore is most receptive to the treatment. The preservative should be applied liberally with a paint brush with plenty on the end grain. It is estimated that one person could do this in no more than one and a half days using approximately 15 litres of preservative.

3.2.2 Damage and Repairs:

In most cases the artist should be approached to carry out repairs, especially where they affect the design elements of the work. Community Services will carry out routine checks for vandalism/other damage as part of their regular maintenance programme. These should be reported immediately and cleaning/repairs made promptly.

3.3 Chris Bailey – Entrance Features



3.3.1 Maintenance:

The primary requirement for maintenance will be to give everything a wipe with clear garden furniture oil a couple of times each year. It is chiefly exposed surfaces that require the oiling as these are the areas that get exposed to the sun and weather.

Garden furniture oil is produced by companies such as Liberon and Rustin's and is similar to Danish oil but it has been used for the same purposes and this does just as good a job, though care must be taken not to use with oils with colour enhancers. Wipe surfaces with a cloth soaked in oil as this tends to not leave too much on the surface. Liberon also make decking oil.

If you need to clean up a surface use a fine gouge to remove the damaged surface or some fine wire wool before re-applying the furniture oil.

3.3.2 Damage and Repairs:

Community Services will carry out routine checks for vandalism and other damage as part of their regular maintenance programme. These should be reported immediately and cleaning/repairs made promptly.

In most cases the artist should be approached to carry out repairs, especially where they affect the design elements of the work. For any repair to colour work – most of the colours are acrylic based wood stains these come in the basic primary and secondary colours along with white and black. They are made by Polyvine (www.polyvine.co.uk) Tel; 0870 787 3710. Additional colours are from Cuprinol's Garden Shades range, these are Barleywood, Silverbirch, Sunflower, Country Cream and Terracotta (small tins on sale were more than adequate for the three pieces).

3.4 Adam Booth – Bridge Balustrades



3.4.1 Maintenance:

The metal is galvanised – an annual inspection would be fine with any damage touched up paint to be used is; TR Williamson Transpeed Fast Coat HBMIO Black, product code; 1906100E53. If the actual paint is left alone and not abused it will last for many years before another coat of paint will be required.

3.4.2 Damage and Repairs:

In most cases the artist should be approached to carry out repairs, especially where they affect the design elements of the work. Community Services will carry out routine checks for vandalism/other damage as part of their regular maintenance programme. These should be reported immediately and cleaning/repairs made promptly.

3.5 Keith Barrett – Central Arena



3.5.1 Maintenance:

The grass should be cut at regular intervals during the growing season, and given any weed-killer/fertilizer treatments as required, as part of THC Community Services usual programme of maintenance. Grass strimming will be required around the arena area where the grass meets the stonework.

The wooden seats require an annual coat of clear preservative, the same as for the wooden benches.

The stone pavements, walls and metal insets should require no treatment – any build up of dirt should be cleaned if necessary.

3.5.2 Damage and Repairs:

In most cases the artist should be approached to carry out repairs, especially where they affect the design elements of the work. Community Services will carry out routine checks for vandalism/other damage as part of their regular maintenance programme. These should be reported immediately and cleaning/repairs made promptly.

3.6 Central Arena

The central arena area is book able and also has a power supply unit which requires management and maintenance.

3.6.1 Booking System for Arena

The Town House reception will keep a diary for booking the arena venue and will hold the key for the power supply unit; to book the venue and/or the power supply key please call 01463 724368. If access is required to the power supply unit the key will need to be signed out and in from Town House reception and, as a key holder, this person must sign the key holder's checklist, please see appendix 4.

If you wish to host an event at the arena you may require an entertainment licence from The Highland Council, Environmental and Regulatory Services for which there will be a charge. Please contact Zoe Skinner on 01463 703941 for more information.

3.6.2 Power Supply Unit

The equipment is a locked cabinet giving access to a number of 16 amp industrial waterproof type socket to which portable equipment detailed below may be connected.

Whether The Highland Council or a third party provide the portable equipment it must be electrically safe and mechanically sound. Inspection of the equipment must be carried out by the key holder of the supply unit. All portable equipment, including leads plugged into the supply unit must carry a test label indicating that the equipment has an up to date test and detailing when the next test is due.

The key holder shall visually check the supply unit each time after use and the supply unit will be tested annually in accordance with the latest edition of the IEE Regulations BS/EN7671 and RCD's.

There will be no cost to hire the use of the supply unit per day, with costs to be reviewed annually.

For more information please see 'Electrical safety at places of entertainment, guidance note GS50' and 'Management of Highland Council outdoor electricity supply points'.

For more details please contact John Beaton, Area Lighting Engineer on 01463 703170 or email john.beaton@highland.gov.uk.

3.7 General Maintenance

Litter collection
Emptying of dog faeces bins
Remedial tree works
Basic grass cutting – minimal (carried out by a Contractor)
Area is closed off during firework displays
Varnishing of Victorian style benches
Bins emptied – 2 or 3 times per week
Flooding in the area – when this occurs extra work is needed
Power washing of bridge surfaces
Painting of Victorian style bridges – every five years

3.8 Tree Management

The high level of public usage and the age of the trees mean that a biennial or possibly an annual tree inspection is required to fulfil The Highland Council's duty of care. This inspection needs to be carried out by a competent person (arboriculturist). To aid and record inspections the trees on the Ness Islands are recorded on a GIS database, held by THC Development and Infrastructure Service.

During tree inspections and any tree surgery consideration will need to be given to bats, if work was going to impact on trees with suitable rot holes and crevices.

There is a need to plant young trees to perpetuate tree cover in the long-term. There are several areas that are suitable for small scale tree planting. As young trees run the risk of failure through shading and vandalism it is probably better to plant relatively large number of small trees (30-40cm transplants) in discrete mulched beds. Once established (2-3m tall after 5-7 years) the best stems should be retained. Community Services will need to be aware of the location of these beds to avoid being mowed or strimmed.

3.9 Staffing

The Community Services team currently resource the staffing required to carry out the maintenance and management identified within this plan.

3.10 Marketing and Publicity

It should be ensured that the Ness Islands are included in as many relevant publications for promotion of the area. Also this management plan makes reference to various partners and user groups and therefore there is an opportunity to develop further marketing ideas. A user guide and events brochure could be published each year to highlight the resource to other user groups and also to tourists visiting the Highland capital.

3.11 Protocol for Closing the Islands

On occasions of severe weather there may be a requirement to close off access to the Ness Islands.

Powers under the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 Section 19 states:

The local authority may do anything which they consider appropriate for the purposes of;

- a. Maintaining a core path
- b. Keeping a core path free from obstruction or encroachment

The route across the Ness Islands is a core path [IN19.04] and also forms part of the Great Glen Way.

Under Section 19 the local authority must act as quickly as is reasonably expected e.g. getting onto the islands when it is safe to do so and clearing the paths of their obstructions before repairing them.

In order to close off the Islands a decision is made by an appropriate Council Officer and the gates are locked with signage put in place informing the public.

An email is then sent by the Assistant Area Manager to the City Manager, Ward Managers, Ward Members and the public relations office explaining why the Islands are closed.

Upon deciding to re-open the Islands a further email is then sent to the same recipients.

4.0 Finance and Work Programme

Currently the Common Good Fund owns the land and therefore pays for the maintenance and management of the islands. The programme of work will develop a service level agreement with the common good fund and Community Services of THC to ensure maintenance and management of the improvements is kept up to a suitable standard. A clear budget will be set in order to carry out the work plans (appendix 5).

4.1 Management Schedule

Implementation of art work maintenance:

Each artist has ensured that the first stages of all maintenance have been carried out as part of the installation process.

Regular work:

- litter collection
- emptying of litter bins
- emptying of dog faeces bins
- basic grass cutting and strimming – currently carried out by a Contractor
- replacing light bulbs
- routine checks of all artwork, bins and Victorian benches for vandalism/other damage

Twice a year:

- wipe entrance features with oil

Annual work:

- remedial tree works
- power wash the bridge surfaces
- treat sculpted benches and table with clear wood preservative
- inspect sculpted benches for roughness and smooth out
- treat sculpted benches with clear fungicide preservative
- treat wooden seats at arena area with clear preservative

- varnish Victorian style benches and paint metal
- inspection of power supply equipment and electrical test BS/EN7671

Long term management:

- engineer inspects bridge surfaces
- inspection of bridge balustrades apply another coat of off white paint to Victorian style bridge balustrades every five years
- apply a new coat of paint to the two artists made small bridges
- arena area managed

One off procedures:

- area closed off for fireworks displays
- flooding will cause area to be closed off
- any emergency response work may require additional funds for work such as tree work, footpath or riverbank repairs

4.2 Project Costs

The following summary details the future maintenance costs, annual sum £32,294.00

- Emptying bins and litter collection (including dog faeces bins)
£10,920.00 – summer 7 day collection for 26 weeks
£3,276.00 – winter 3 day collection for 13 weeks
£2,184.00 – spring 2 day collection for 13 weeks
(above also includes routine inspection of benches and entrance features)
- Sweeping footpaths
£1,512.00 – once per month 12 occasions
- Tree inspections
£522.00 – annual tree inspection from the ground
£10,000.00 – tree works and shrub pruning
(any work over this allocation would require additional allocation of funds)
- Electrical test and inspection of power supply unit
£250.00
- Maintenance of entrance features and sculpted benches
£420.00– notional sum for entrance features
£1,050.00– rub down and treat with preservative/fungicide
(any damage requiring repairs by the artists would require an additional allocation of funds)
- Power washing bridge surfaces
£2,160.00 – quarterly

In addition bridge and riverbank inspections will also be required and the hiring of consultant engineers A F Cruden to carry out these tasks would be required;

- Bridge inspections
£3,000 – general inspections (every 3 years)

£5,000 – detailed inspections (every 9 years)
(any work identified following the inspections major would require additional allocation of funds)

- Riverbank inspections
£2,500 – annual inspections
(any work identified following the inspections major would require additional allocation of funds)

All costs for the consultant are to be reviewed annually in line with inflation.

Any flood damage and/or callouts to close islands would require an additional allocation of funds.

For reference and future repair/repainting the colour of the paint on the bins, lamp-posts, Banana Bridge and railings is RAL 6012 Black Green.

If there is any specific repair work required to the artist's work due to vandalism this would not be covered by the annual maintenance budget.

In addition to the annual budget for maintenance and management it is recommended that there is provision for an annual allocation for refurbishment and environmental improvements as required. There is also a need to cover the cost of electricity for the power supply unit at the central arena.

To allow for this flexibility it is recommended by Community Services that a total allocation of **£35,000** be made by the Common Good Fund to the Ness Islands maintenance regime, not including funding required for consultant fees which would be required every 3 or 9 years.

Appendix 1

Map of Area



 <p>The Highland Council Partnership for Highland Council © The Highland Council</p>	<h3>Ness Islands</h3> <p>Ref: Dishes Mapure Date: 19th August 2007</p>	<p>0 50 100 200 metres</p> <p><small>Responsible for the content of this map is the Highland Council. The Highland Council is not responsible for any errors or omissions. The Highland Council is not responsible for any damage or loss of data or information. The Highland Council is not responsible for any damage or loss of data or information. The Highland Council is not responsible for any damage or loss of data or information.</small></p>
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Appendix 2

Abbreviations

HIEIEH	Highlands and Islands Enterprise, Inverness and East Highland
ICP	Inverness City Partnership
IEE	Institute of Electrical Engineers
RCD	Residual Current Device
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
THC	The Highland Council

Appendix 3

Artists Contact Details

Keith Barrett

50 Seymour Street
North Shields
Tyne and Wear
NE29 6SN
Mobile; 07973 141 482
Email; keith@keithbarrett.co.uk

Nigel Ross

Clunie Schoolhouse
Clunie
Blairgowrie
Perthshire
PH10 6RJ
Tel; 07977 210 070
Email; nigelross@breathe.com

Chris Bailey

Corseburn of Cults
Kennethmont
Huntly
Aberdeenshire
AB54 4QR
Tel/Fax; 01464 831 647

Adam Booth

Pipers Forge
Kirkpatrick Durham
Castle Douglas
Dumfries and Galloway
DG7 3HQ
Tel/Fax; 01556 650 513
Mobile; 07748 537 219
Email; adam-booth@pipersforge.freeserve.co.uk

Appendix 4

Key Holder Checklist

A visual check should be carried out, with the equipment disconnected, by the key holder, to ascertain whether or not the electrical equipment, portable cables/leads and plug tops to be connected the Council's supply point are in a sound condition as follows;

(NB – non electrical checks are outside the scope of this checklist)

Item	Test	Pass Condition
Cables/Leads	Check there is no damage (apart from light scuffing) to the cable and there are no cuts, splits and crush damage or taped joints.	No inner (coloured, brown/blue or green/yellow) insulation visible. No taped joint in cable.
Plugs	Check there is no damage to the plug casing e.g. cracks or bent pins and the cable is properly clamped.	No cracks in plug casing or bent or damaged pins, no damage allowing contact with the plugs internal connections. The cable is clamped securely by the outer sheath and no inner insulation is visible.
Equipment Connectors	Check there is no broken casing on the equipment and cable connectors. Check cable clamp.	No cracks in plug or socket casing. No damage allowing contact with plug or socket internal connections. Cable clamped securely by outer sheath, no inner insulation visible.
Equipment Cable Entry	Check grommet or clamp is still there. Check cable clamp.	No sharp edges are in contact with the cable. Cable clamped securely. Non inner insulation visible.
Equipment Mains on/off switch voltage selector switch etc	Check for broken insulation.	No cracked insulation, no loose part, no parts missing.
Equipment Housing	Check for general condition. Check for loose parts inside.	No holes (large enough to put a finger in) close to mains cables or switches. No rattles when equipment is tilted a quarter of a turn.
All of the above items	Check there is no evidence of over heating.	No signs of burn marks or discolouration.
The Equipment portable cables/leads	Check for up to date testing label on pieces of equipment.	Up to date testing label attached to all equipment/with date of next test.

Appendix 5

Work Plan

Work	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Other
Emptying all bins and litter collection	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	Weekly	
Grass cutting				As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract					
Sweeping footpaths	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	
Replace light bulbs													As required
Bridge inspections													As required
Remedial tree work													As required
Riverbank inspections													Annually
Visual tree inspection													Annually
Power wash bespoke bridge surfaces			Quarterly			Quarterly			Quarterly			Quarterly	
Bench work			Treat with clear wood preservative	Treat with clear fungicide preservative	Rub down and smooth								
Gateway features				Treat with clear garden furniture oil					Treat with clear garden furniture oil				
Bridge railings													As required
Arena area			Treat with clear wood preservative	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract	As per grass cutting contract					
Electrical test supply unit													Annually

- Weekly
- Treat with clear wood preservative
- Treat with clear garden furniture oil
- Monthly
- As per grass cutting contract
- Treat with clear fungicide preservative
- As required
- Annually
- Rub down and smooth
- Quarterly