

The Highland Council
City of Inverness Area Committee

Minutes of Meeting of the **Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee** held in Committee Room 1, Council Headquarters, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness on Monday 22 April 2024 at 10.00 am.

Present:

Mr C Ballance	Mrs I MacKenzie (remote)
Mr M Cameron (remote)	Mrs K MacLean
Mrs G Campbell-Sinclair (remote)	Mrs E McAllister
Mr A Graham (Chair)	Mrs M Reid

In attendance:

Mr D Haas, Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South
Mr S Taylor, Civic and Facilities Team Leader
Mr K Forbes, Property Manager (Estates Management) (Item 3a only)
Mrs H Tolmie, Administrative Assistant, Inverness City Area Manager's Office
Ms M Murray, Principal Committee Officer, Performance and Governance Service

Mr A Graham in the Chair

Business

1. Apologies for Absence

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

2. Declarations of Interest/Transparency Statements

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

Item 3a: Mr A Graham and Mrs M Reid

Item 4: Mr A Graham, Mrs E McAllister and Mrs M Reid

Item 10: Mr A Graham

3. 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 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.

In terms of Standing Order 8, the Chair agreed to accept the following urgent additional item of business due to the nature of the request and the short timescale involved.

3a. Urgent Additional Item:

Request to vary terms of lease – Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club

Declarations of Interest: The undernoted Members declared an interest in this item and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting for the duration of the item:-

Mr A Graham – as an Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club season ticket holder.

Mrs M Reid – as a member of Inverness Caledonian Thistle Women’s Football Academy.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for this item.

The Property Manager (Estates Management) provided details of a request by Inverness Caledonian Thistle Football Club to vary the terms of their lease of a 15-acre site at the Longman, Inverness.

Following detailed discussion, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points, the Sub-Committee **AGREED** that a report on the matter, taking into account the points raised during discussion, be submitted to the City of Inverness Area Committee on 27 May 2024, and that negotiations on the potential terms continue in the meantime.

4. Requests for Financial Assistance 2023/24

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/05/24 dated 24 April 2024 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. Copies of the applications and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

In introducing the report, the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, spoke to the financial position, highlighting that, in respect of the “Other” budget category, Conference Funding and Partnership Working, the sum of the applications before the Sub-Committee exceeded the budget available. The procedures to be followed were summarised, and the importance of considering each application on its merits to ensure fairness was emphasised.

Discussion then took place on the various appendices to the report, during which clarification was sought, and provided, on a number of points. In particular, it was explained that in the event a project did not come to fruition and the application was withdrawn the funding went back into the general Inverness Common Good Fund. The fairness of that arrangement having been questioned, it was confirmed that a summary of grant funds returned to the Inverness Common Good Fund could be included in the financial monitoring report to the City of Inverness Area Committee and a request made that the funds be awarded to the Sub-Committee budget. In addition, concern was expressed regarding the practice of committing funds from the following

year's budget before 1 April, and the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, confirmed he was happy to present a report in that regard to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

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

Applications up to £5,000

Applicant: 12th Inverness Boys' Brigade
Project/activity: 70th Anniversary trip to Holland – Summer 2024
Amount requested: £4,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applicant: Astar School of Traditional Music
Project/activity: Astar Groupwork Classes
Amount requested: £1,218.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Declaration of Interest: Mrs E McAllister declared an interest in the following application on the basis that a family member played for Balloan Football Club and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: Balloan FC
Project/activity: Trip to Caldas-da-rainha in Portugal for International Football Tournament
Amount requested: £5,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

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 an affinity to the applicant due to his previous employment with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Mrs M Reid – as family members attended Bun-sgoil Ghàidhlig Inbhir Nis.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for the following application.

Applicant: Feis na h-Oige
Project/activity: Club G
Amount requested: £1,315.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applicant: Rah Rah Community Theatre Company
Project/activity: My Mind is Free - Inverness
Amount requested: £3,361.00

Decision: **DEFERRED** to allow the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, to seek further information on the local benefit, and clarity in respect of the budget.

Applicant: Red Chair Highland Ltd
Project/activity: Digital Inclusion
Amount requested: £4,900.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applicant: Charleston Academy
Project/activity: Ocean Youth Trust Employability Voyage
Amount requested: £1,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applicant: Glen Albyn Explorer Scouts
Project/activity: Explorer Belt Expedition to Sweden
Amount requested: £2,600.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Declaration of Interest: Mrs M Reid declared an interest in the following application as a Member of Highland Disability Sport and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: Highland Disability Sport
Project/activity: SDS National Swimming Championships 2024
Amount requested: £3,500.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applicant: University of the Highlands and Islands
Project/activity: IGNITE 24 – Highland Engineering Environment Science Technology Festival
Amount requested: £5,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Other)

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application as he had an affinity to the applicant due to his previous employment with Bòrd na Gàidhlig and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for the following application.

Applicant: Inverness Gaelic Choir
Project/activity: Inverness Gaelic Choir Running Costs
Amount requested: £4,999.00
Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £2,500.00 (Other)

Applicant: Northern Counties Cricket Club
Project/activity: Replace and upgrade training facilities
Amount requested: £3,605.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Other)

It was commented that it would be helpful if Ward Members could be kept informed of such applications. In addition, concern was expressed regarding the format of the application form, some of the text having been cut off, and the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, confirmed that this would be addressed as appropriate in future.

Applicant: Inverness Orienteering Club
Project/activity: Scottish Orienteering Championships (Individual)
Amount requested: £2,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £1634.00 (Other)

Applicant: M.ad Agency Ltd
Project/activity: Inverness Cocktail Week
Amount requested: £5,000.00
Decision: **DECLINED** on the grounds the event was a commercial venture with no community benefit.

Applicant: Beneath the Surface Ltd
Project/activity: Monsterfest 2024
Amount requested: £5,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Other)

Urgent Additional Item:

In terms of Standing Order 8, the Chair confirmed that he had agreed to accept the following application as an urgent additional item of business due to the nature of the application and the fact that the request for funding was for equipment for the provision of services to cancer patients.

Applicant: The Maggie Keswick Jencks Cancer Caring Centres Trust (Maggie's)
Project/activity: Maggie's Highland Kitchen Renovation
Amount requested: £4,080.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality)

Applications £5,001 to £10,000

Applicant: City of Inverness Pipe Band
Project/activity: Community Pipe Band
Amount requested: £10,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** (Other)

Applicant: Scottish Chamber Orchestra
Project/activity: Immerse
Amount requested: £10,000
Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £5,000.00 (Other), subject to the provision of further information, particularly on the scope of the project and whether the Education and Learning Service or High Life Highland considered it would be of benefit to school pupils.

It was **AGREED** that the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, would liaise with Sub-Committee Members by email to confirm they were content with the response prior to making the award.

Applicant: The Inverness Darkroom

Project/activity: Future Proof the next 5 years towards a sustainable community darkroom

Amount requested: £9,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £2,000.00 (Other)

Applicant: The Mahler Players

Project/activity: The Mahler Players performances in Inverness Cathedral

Amount requested: £7,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £3,500.00 (Other)

Applications over £10,000

Declaration of Interest: Mrs M Reid declared an interest in the following application as she knew the applicant and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Applicant: Inverness Blitz

Project/activity: Highland Youth Empowerment Program

Amount requested: £16,000

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Poverty and Inequality).

Applicant: UHI Inverness

Project/activity: Caring Conversations

Amount requested: £23,145.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **REFUSED** on the grounds that the project would be more appropriately funded from UHI core funding.

Applicant: UHI Inverness

Project/activity: Community Food Larder

Amount requested: £14,000.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **REFUSED** on the grounds of insufficient community benefit and that it would set a precedent which would not be sustainable.

Applicant: Inverness Sea Cadets

Project/activity: Building Fabric Improvements

Amount requested: £20,000.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** (Other Properties).

Conference Funding Applications

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application as a Trustee of the Northern Meeting Piping Association and, in

accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for the following application.

Applicant: Northern Meeting Charitable Piping Trust
Project/activity: Northern Meeting Solo Piping Competitions 2024
Amount requested: £9,800.00
Decision: **APPROVED** an award of £4,900.00

It was highlighted that section 1.7 of the application form required to be updated, former Councillor Roderick Balfour having passed away. The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, undertook to raise this with the applicant.

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 an affinity to the applicant due to his previous employment with Bòrd na Gàidhlig.

Mrs M Reid – as she had been involved in discussions around the project.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for the following application.

Applicant: An Comunn Gaidhealach (Inverness Branch)
Project/activity: Inverness Provincial Mod 2024
Amount requested: £7,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** a partial award of £2,500.00

Applicant: Hands Up for Trads
Project/activity: MG ALBA Scots Trad Music Awards or Na Trads
Amount requested: £16,220.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that an award of £8,110.00 be **APPROVED**.

Applicant: Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)
Project/activity: A3 Scotland 2024 Conference
Amount requested: £10,000.00
Decision: **APPROVED** an award of £5,000.00

Applicant: World Ultra Corporation Ltd
Project/activity: Ultra X Scotland
Amount requested: £8,000.00
Decision: Following a vote, **REFUSED** on the grounds of questions regarding the accuracy of the information provided on the project costs, there potentially being an obvious error.

Mr C Ballance, seconded by Mr M Cameron, **moved** that the application be refused.

As an **amendment**, Mrs E McAllister, seconded by Ms K MacLean, moved a partial award of £5,000.00 subject to clarification of the budget.

On a vote being taken, there were five votes for the **motion** and two 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, Mr A Graham, Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs M Reid.

For the Amendment:

Ms K MacLean, Mrs E McAllister.

Partnership Working Applications

The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, explained that the following application was recurring and the sum requested should have been included within the structure of the Inverness Common Good Fund Budget when it had been approved by the City of Inverness Area Committee in February 2024. If Members were minded to approve the application, it would be from Inverness Common Good Fund Reserves.

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness Ltd

Project/activity: Promoting Inverness for Business Events

Amount requested: £20,000.00

Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED** from Inverness Common Good Fund Reserves.

Applicant: Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Continuing Food and Drink Tourism

Amount requested: £10,000.00

Decision: **APPROVED**, following a vote.

Mr A Graham, seconded by Ms K MacLean, **moved** that the requested amount of £10,000.00 be approved.

As an **amendment**, Mrs E McAllister, seconded by Mrs M Reid, moved that the application be refused.

On a vote being taken, there were three votes for the **motion** and three votes for the **amendment**, with no abstentions. In terms of Standing Order 29, the Chair exercised his casting vote in favour of the **motion** which was therefore **carried**, the votes having been cast as follows:-

For the Motion:

Mr M Cameron, Mr A Graham (casting vote), Ms K MacLean.

For the Amendment:

Mrs I MacKenzie, Mrs E McAllister, Mrs M Reid.

The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, highlighted that the Partnership Working budget had now been fully committed and the following application could therefore not be considered.

Applicant: Inverness BID/Visit Inverness Loch Ness

Project/activity: Inverness Joint Marketing Innovation and Development Project
Amount requested: £24,165.00
Decision: **NOTED** that there were insufficient funds remaining in the Partnership Working budget to consider the application.

Other Properties

Applicant: Apex Scotland
Project/activity: Apex Scotland Challenge Team
Amount requested: £17,096.00
Decision: **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** that the application be **APPROVED**.

A breakdown of the work being undertaken having been requested, the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, undertook to liaise with Apex Scotland and revert to Mrs I MacKenzie.

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to determine the applications for up to and including £10,000 as detailed above, the Conference Funding awards having been reduced by 50% to ensure fairness given the budget available;
- ii. **AGREED TO RECOMMEND** to the City of Inverness Area Committee, at its meeting on 27 May 2024, that the applications for more than £10,000 be determined as detailed above, the Conference Funding award having been reduced by 50% to ensure fairness given the budget available;
- iii. **NOTED** that there was £1,761.00 remaining in the "Other" budget category; and
- iv. **AGREED** that a summary of grant funds returned to the Inverness Common Good Fund be included in the financial monitoring report to the City of Inverness Area Committee and a request made that the funds be awarded to the Inverness Common Good Fund Sub-Committee budget; and
- v. **AGREED** that a report be presented to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee on the point raised regarding the practice of committing funding from the following year's budget before 1 April.

In terms of Standing Order 9, the Committee **AGREED** to consider items 10, 11 and 15 at this stage.

10. Civic Hospitality Requests

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/06/24 dated 10 April 2024 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South. Copies of the applications and supporting documentation had been made available via SharePoint.

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: The Highland Council
Event: 2024 Highland Council Staff Awards
Venue: Macdonald Drumossie Hotel, Inverness
Cost: Financial Contribution of £2,500.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Declaration of Interest: Mr A Graham declared an interest in the following application as a Trustee of the Northern Meeting Piping Association and, in accordance with paragraph 5.6 of the revised Code of Conduct, left the meeting while the application was being discussed.

Mrs E McAllister took the Chair for the following application.

Organisation: Northern Meeting Piping
Event: Northern Meeting Piping Competition
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)
Cost: £3,853.30
Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Speakeasy Productions
Event: A3 Conference 2024
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)
Cost: £5,304.30
Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Northern Counties Lady Curlers
Event: Canadian Ladies Curling Tour 2024 – Welcome to Inverness and the Highlands
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)
Cost: £5,379.98
Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Buffet at a cost of £3,249.98

Organisation: The Highland Council
Event: 80th Anniversary D-Day Flag Raising
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Buffet)
Cost: £1,025.00
Decision: **APPROVED**

Organisation: Highland Division Girls' Brigade
Event: Celebration of 60 years as a Company
Venue: Inverness Town House (Civic Dinner)
Cost: £4,773.00
Decision: **APPROVED** a Civic Buffet at a cost of £2,543.00

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 for civic hospitality as detailed above.

11. Civic Hospitality Recurring Events

There had been circulated Report No. ICGF/07/24 dated 10 April 2024 by the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee:-

- i. **APPROVED** the recurring events list as circulated; 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 2024/2025.

15. Town House Front Meeting Space (Former Town Clerk's Office)

The Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, spoke to a proposal to upgrade the Town House front meeting space, as show on Item 15 Appendix 1 of the agenda and papers, which would bring the room up to modern standards comparative to top end meeting rooms in the city.

During discussion, information was sought, and provided, as to how many years it would take to recoup the investment in letting fees, and whether the proposal fit with the overall vision for the Town House.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to endorse the Senior Community Development Manager's decision on the investment to upgrade the Town House front meeting space, as shown on Item 15 Appendix 1 of the agenda and papers. It was **NOTED** that the maximum anticipated budget was £45,000 from the Town House Maintenance budget.

5. Internal Applications – Bught Park

The Sub-Committee had been invited to consider an application from the Principal Project Manager, Properties and Facilities Management, Property and Housing, towards the installation of a new electricity pillar in Bught Park.

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to award a sum of £4,989 from the Other Properties Budget.

6. Operation Respect Festive 2023

There had been circulated an Evaluation Report for Operation Respect Festive 2023.

During discussion, in relation to violence against women on public transport, it was suggested that consideration be given to marshalling bus stops as well as taxi ranks in future years.

Having otherwise commended the Operation Respect initiative, the Sub-Committee:-

- i. **NOTED** the report; and
- ii. **AGREED** that the Senior Community Development Manager, Inverness and South, feed back the suggestion regarding marshalling bus stops to Operation Respect partners.

7. Planefield Road Bowling Club

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that essential health and safety works to the paths at the Planefield Road Bowling Club had been carried out and £15,590 had been charged against the Other Properties budget for 2023/24.

8. 1-5 Church Street

The Sub-Committee **AGREED** to homologate the decision to agree to a lease surrender of 1-5 Church Street, Inverness back to the Common Good Fund and place it on the market for let.

9. Evaluation Forms

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

12. Homologation of Civic Hospitality Requests

The Sub-Committee:-

- i. **AGREED** to homologate the decision to agree the civic visit to St Valery en Caux to attend the 80th Anniversary of the Liberation of Saint Valery en Caux. It was **NOTED** that the civic party would now only include the Provost and the Senior Community Development Officer, Inverness and South; and
- ii. **NOTED** that £1,183.32 had been charged to the 2023/24 Civic Hospitality budget for the private dinner to honour the Vice Lord-Lieutenant's retiral and recognise the many years of contributions he had made to the City of Inverness.

13. Civic Lighting Requests

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following Civic Lighting requests for the period 1 January 2024 to 30 April 2024:-

- International Kawasaki Disease Day
- Chinese New Year – Year of the Dragon
- International Angelmans Day
- Mikeysline
- Epilepsy
- Royal Canadian Air Force/Canadian Armed Forces
- Baby Loss Awareness
- Samaritians
- Global Intergenerational Week
- Sarcoidosis Awareness Month

14. Free Hall Lets

Information having been sought, and provided, on the basis upon which free hall lets were granted, the Sub-Committee **NOTED** the following free hall lets:-

- 30/03/24 – Shireen Fyfe - Yoga – Strictly (10am -12pm) - £180
- 04/02/24 – Jason Kelman - Strictly Dance Class (10am - 4pm) - £540

- 06/04/24 – Jason Kelman - Strictly Coffee Morning (9am – 4pm) - £630
- 20/04/24 – Jade McIntyre - Highland Dancing Workshop – Strictly - £180

16. Date of Next Meeting

The Sub-Committee **NOTED** that the next meeting would take place on Monday 5 August 2024 and **AGREED** that it and future meetings should commence at the earlier time of 9.30 am.

The meeting concluded at 3.15 pm.