

# **Empowering Nairnshire Communities**

**a presentation for**

**Donna Manson** new Highland CEO  
**Nairn Community and Arts Centre**

**14 December 2018**

coordinated by

**Nairn River and West and Suburban Community Councils**

**NICE (Nairn's Community Development Trust)**

**Nairn Residents Concern Group**



# Welcome to Nairn

# Community Objectives

## 1- Strategic Change

We'd like Highland Council to:

- reform structures to engage and collaborate better with communities (NNCP , Area Committee, Common Good )
- Shift attitudes and culture to enable that process
- Reassign staffing and financial resources
- Ensure transparency, accountability and local scrutiny
- Support a new community led Locality Plan for Nairnshire

# Community Objectives

## 2/Local Delivery

- **Public/Statutory services, school,( parents groups)**  
health,( Nairn Hospital) housing (residents group), transport
- **Supporting local business BID( Association of Nairn Businesses), tourism(Visit Nairn), parking**
- **Voluntary /community activity**
- **Culture/arts, heritage( Museum), leisure, (Team Hamish, Lido)**  
environment (Allotments, Keep Nairn Beautiful, Green Hive)

# **Nairn's Community Councils**

current challenges  
and future vision

**Mandy Lawson Secretary  
Nairn River Community Council**

# Highland Council

## cultural barriers to community engagement

### Resistance to community empowerment

- not listening to or valuing community feedback
- Refusal of participation requests from Nairn
- More obstruction than support from some HC officers and Councillors
- 60% cut in tiny Community Council budgets is wrong message when role of communities in local governance is set to grow

### Failure to consult with or work with communities

- No prior consultation on recent HC decisions for Nairn (parking charges, removal of NHS dental services)
- Only one 'community' voice at Community Planning Partnership
- Public excluded from Nairnshire Local Committee meetings

### A lack of transparency/openness

- no publicly available up to date Common Good asset register
- Delays and reluctance in answering public questions
- Changes to Local Plan without community consultation
- Not enough disaggregated locality data to inform communities

**This has to change. Communities can help.**

# Highland has sold Nairn short

Since 1996 Nairn has endured

- poor management of resources, neglect of its assets(eg CG) and a failure of forward planning
- Intensive housing development at Lochloy which has failed to deliver 'infrastructure first'
- missing millions of Developer Contributions
- broken promises on a new Nairn Academy, and planned school and community facilities, including a bridge over railway, at Lochloy
- Local infrastructure at bursting point. A96 traffic jams, flood risk and ancient sewers
- missing out on our 'fair share' of Highland funding ( including City Region Deal )

# **Our community is ready**

## **-we can do this better**

### **Nairnshire communities can**

- **Bring local skills and experience to the table**
- **Find new ways and funds to get things done for Nairn**
- **Help Highland Council move forward, learn from past challenges and manage change**
- **Develop a new Nairnshire locality plan**
- **Collaborate across voluntary, private and public sectors**
- **Take on management of Nairn's Common Good**
- **Help Highland Council save waste and get best value from limited resources**

# Future Vision

## for Nairn Community organisations

- More community led locality forums
- Multi agency meetings on local themes
- joint Community Council meetings
- open dialogue with more local say in decision making
- local knowledge and experience and valued as a resource by THC

No more 'shooting the messenger'.....

# Trust us, Listen to us

- **include communities** in meetings and let us speak up for local residents and service users
- **inform communities** provide better locality data and answers to our questions
- **involve communities** in planning and shaping services to suit local needs and get value for money
- **consult communities** before decisions are made, not afterwards, and value feedback on services
- **resource community engagement** support Community Councils and other local organisations to work together with public authorities, provide funds for community meetings, administration and local surveys



**Nairn Improvement Community Enterprise**



# **Nairn Improvement Community**

## **Enterprise(NICE)**

**Established after Community Meeting in 2012**

**Company Limited by Guarantee**

**Registered Charity**

**Registered as a Community Body under "Right to Buy"**

**Over 1,000 members**

**Objects Clause is Regeneration of Nairn**

**Produced Original Vision for Nairn in 2014**

**Established and Funded the BID Steering Group**

**Team Hamish is part of NICE**

**Directors have Business & Professional Experience**

# **SUGGESTIONS for WAY FORWARD for**

## **LINKS & TOWN CENTRE : the 'NAIRN PROJECT'**

Highland Council consultation has NICE in a lead role on key elements of the above Project

Nick Wright ( consultant) asked NICE to present a proposal

NICE is prepared to lead and establish a Project Team

Team Hamish funds can get project started and leverage in other funders

NICE is exploring a 'Consortium' approach with potential

**Members:** Harbour Group; James' Café; Links Tearoom; Sailing Club; Kayaking Club; Keeping Nairn Colourful; Green Hive; Nairn Connects BID; Nairn Museum Trustees

### **Strength of Consortium model**

- NICE could be lead member, and hire qualified professionals where necessary, such as a project manager (like the BID)
- Option to create contractual relationships between members
- Could strike a single deal with Common Good Trustees for use of land
- Will demonstrate to external funders that Nairn is "joined up"
- Flexible, each member retains financial independence

# **The Scottish Context**

**Community Empowerment Act**  
communities in the driving seat

**Scottish Planning Bill**  
joining up spatial and community planning

# Locality Planning 1

## Past planning practice – not fit for purpose

- Previous and current development plans (HwLDP, IMFLDP) have been imposed without effective and meaningful consultation
- these plans have been based on unrealistic assumptions (eg on growth) and unachievable targets (eg on housebuilding), and have not taken on board local input and priorities
- concentration on land-allocation for housing-development has failed to address infrastructure (roads, drainage, sewage, shared spaces), which has consequently not kept pace
- this has led to problems (evident in Nairn) of road capacity, traffic management, access constraints, inadequacy of drainage and sewage networks, and neglected public spaces
- oversight and utilisation of Section 75 developer contributions – funding which might have mitigated these issues - has been ineffective

# Locality Planning 2

## A different (more holistic) local planning process

- Government policy (CEA, 'Infrastructure First', 'Making Places') stipulates community-driven locality planning
- this requires a new approach, reliable data, realistic forecasts and meaningful local engagement which ensures local “ownership” of the plan
- The community in Nairn has the expertise and capacity to produce and discuss a new local Nairnshire plan in partnership with the relevant authorities and agencies,
- This could serve as a model for a new way of working if the Council is prepared to collaborate and provide professional support
- A different planning process would complement and support the moves towards disaggregated and localised budgeting and resource management

# Schools and Education

new Academy needed  
more primary and early years capacity  
more adult education

# Education

## Infrastructure - 1

- Most urgent issue – a new Nairn Academy.
- Must accept ‘good enough’, not press for ‘perfect’.
- Must engage & consult early with those most affected by existing site rebuild – local residents.
- Must consider longer-term needs for Primary Schools to avoid closing-off good options.
- Must ensure that we think about what new-build Academy does for Tertiary and Adult Education.
- Must consider all opportunities including Social Enterprise concepts to reduce future running costs and/or increase income.

# Education Infrastructure - 2

- Both Millbank and Rosebank have infra issues that limit their useful life and functionality.
- By 2030 will Nairn town need three Primaries?
- Identify ideal sites for two-Primary (East & West?) and three-Primary (East, Centre, West?) solutions.
- How could (Community) land be factored into future provision option? Showfield, Sandown?
- If Primaries are relocated in future, what happens to the existing sites? Reinvest Disposal Receipts?
- Early Years provision must be included in any changes – but how best to do that?

# Health and Social Care

## NAIRN'S INTEGRATED HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

### A MODEL FOR HIGHLAND

# Nairn Hospital Facilities



# Housing in Nairn

# Nairn's Social Housing

current supply and mix does not match demand

Nov 2017

382 on Nairn's housing waiting list, (20% are transfers)

- 243 ( 64%) wanted 1 bedroom
- 86 (23%) needed 2 bedrooms
- 31( 8%) needed 3 bedrooms
- 22(6%) needed 4 bedrooms

Nairn has a stock of 908 social rented homes

33% with 1 bed, 40% 2 beds and 23% 3 beds

More single person and 1 bed homes are needed

In Dec 2018 12 town centre properties (mainly 1 bed) were for sale under £100,000. Why not buy them for social rent?

## Empty Homes

In 2017 more than 200 properties in Nairn were unoccupied while more than 300 people waited for affordable social housing.

# Private Housing

Current Local Plan : unrealistic projections for Nairn

## Housing Build

### Last 5 years 2014-18

Projected <i>Highland wide Local Dev Plan</i>	800
Actual Nairn Build(completions)	233 (30%)
Overestimation	567 (70%)

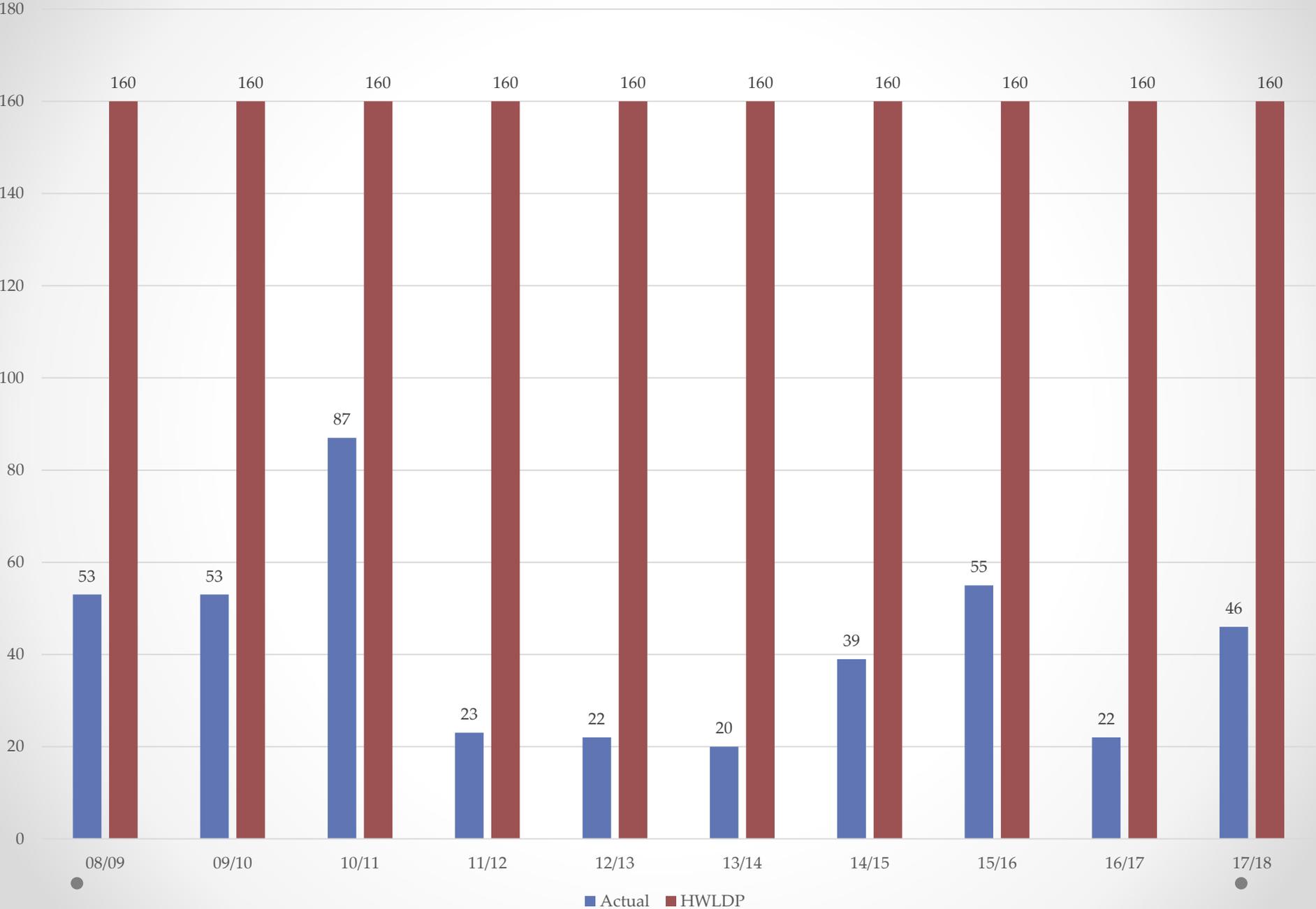
### Next 5 years

#### *Highland Council Local Housing Strategy*

Reduced new build target for Nairn to 348 houses  
(average 70 per year)

On current data, this is still an overestimate of 30%

# Nairn House Completions (Blue) cf HWLDP

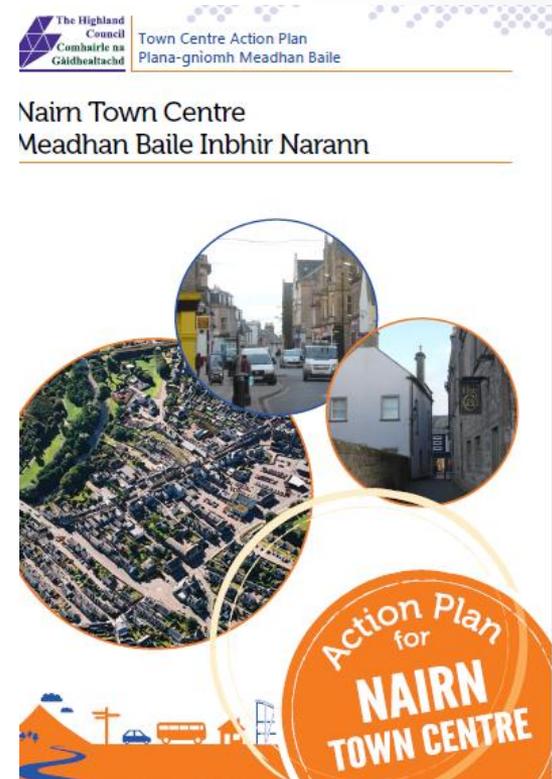


# Nairn Town Centre

## Town Centre Charrette public consultation May 2014

### 3 key themes

- Improve High Street environment and expand activities
- Make better use of area between King Street and the High Street
- Improve walking and cycling links between Town Centre and surroundings







## Working together to make Nairn a must-visit destination for all

Working with local businesses and the community, the BID aims to :

- Brand Nairn and re-develop the town's reputation as a must visit destination
- Deliver higher profile marketing & social media campaigns to
- Market the town to a local, regional, national & international audience
- Improve economic opportunities and deliver economic growth for businesses in the town and surrounding area
- Increase events & footfall, with a longer season and more spend in the town
- Make Nairn more visually attractive and welcoming
- Support & develop strong business relationships and networks
- Provide better infrastructure with improved signage and mapping of the town
- Improve business relationships with each other, the local authority and the community and
- Give businesses a strong unified voice.



## NAIRN BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT

- The newly-formed NAIRN BID is a proven framework for mobilising local enterprises
- The BID has the power to generate additional funding, and to agree and implement a programme of project initiatives and action which reflect local priorities
- this will deliver improvements in the business economy, revive the High Street/Town centre, and help the town achieve its full potential
- BID will work with Nairn's community to help the town thrive
- BID's success relies on the active support of the Council (which is a member and contributor) in order to deliver its programme
- the timing is critical:
- the new BID has to rapidly establish its credibility and the confidence of its paying members

**BUT**

- there is already a major issue.....



# PARKING CHARGES: a major obstacle



- the current proposal to impose a parking charges scheme will be severely damaging
- the scheme will create a problem where none currently exists
- it will result in displacement, overspill, pressure on other non-Council parking and will lead to 'unofficial' parking on open spaces and residential streets
- It will exacerbate social exclusion (especially for the elderly and less able)
- the scheme's costs are significant and imprecise, and the revenue uncertain: no local business case has been prepared
- there has been no study of the economic impact - on the town's economy, on retail business, on employment, and on tourism. The scheme will deter visitors, reduce footfall, and add to the cost burden on local firms
- The scheme is ill-judged and short-sighted. It will pull the rug out from under the many constructive and imaginative local project ideas and activities which the community would like to pursue.
- Imposition of this scheme will destroy beyond recovery any belief that the Highland Council may be willing to listen, to take account of local views and interests, to cooperate with the community,
- to support the local economy, or to work in partnerships.
- The parking issue is a litmus test. It's a make or break.
- The widely publicised experience of Brechin, Forfar, Montrose, Kirriemuir in Angus is a stark warning.



# PARKING CHARGES:

## The Way Forward



- There may be other ways of achieving savings, reducing expenditure, generating additional revenue to meet local costs ( road repairs etc).
- Such alternatives need to be explored, fully and methodically, and on the basis of clear information and data
- Our local Councillors have a clear role to play in consulting on alternative and less damaging options and identifying an acceptable way forward
- With the right consultation framework in place, the community (BID and others) are ready to examine other solutions in a constructive and creative spirit.
- But to clear the way and enable that to proceed, the current proposition has to be withdrawn. The BID, and the local community, cannot engage on this important issue under duress or under threat.

# Nairn Tourism





# Tourism Opportunities

*\* Develop a Nairn-based road route via Elgin, Speyside, Grantown taking in heritage and whisky.*

*\* Discover Nairn: Online info board on points of interest around Nairn using QR Codes.*



*\* Nairn Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO)*

## *Threats: Tourism Tax*

*Infrastructure is an issue but takes money out of local economy*

*How to ensure fairness across all providers?*

*How will it link in with [Booking.com](https://www.booking.com), FreeToBook, AirBnB?*

*What about business people and workmen?*

*Why should providers become unpaid tax collectors?*

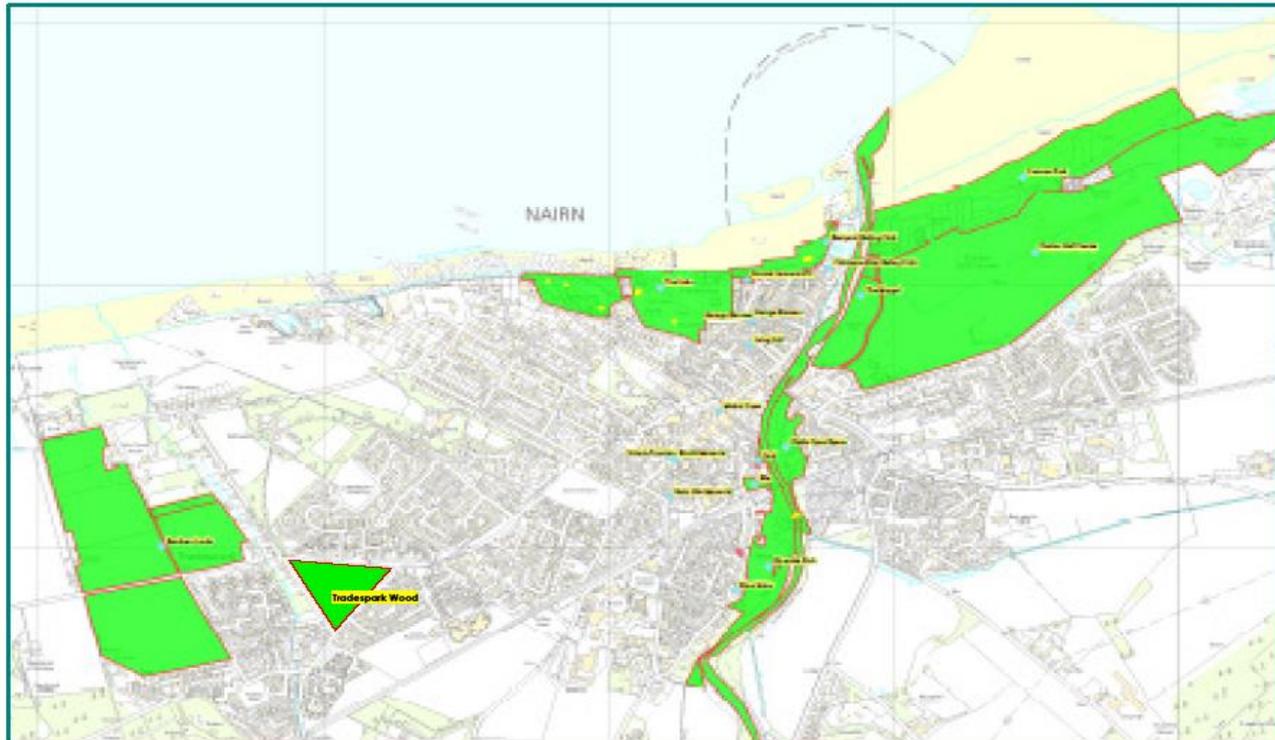
# Nairn Museum

## Issues of Concern

- Funding
- Building
- Building Lease
- Outside Interests
- Green Space



# Nairn's Common Good



# Nairn's Common Good

- **What is it?**
- land and property, notional value some **£8m**, owned by and for the benefit of the people of Nairn;
- **Who controls it?** - Highland Council officials and councillors
- 
- **Why is this an issue?**
- the local community has no say in the decisions made
- the Council has a conflict of interest
- past management has been inefficient
- 
- **How might it be managed differently?**
- local, independent trustees, possibly with charitable status
- 
- **Why does this matter?**
- because the Common Good is key to underpinning, and enabling, local projects and schemes to benefit Nairn

# Local Project Ideas

# Team Hamish

# #TeamHamish

## VISION FOR NAIRN

### BACKGROUND

#TeamHamish was established in May 2017 following the death of our son on February 20th. Our Mission Statement was two fold, firstly, the creation of special Community places, spaces and facilities for all ages and abilities to enjoy - we felt this would be an appropriate 'Thank you' to the Community of Nairn for their continued support throughout Hamish's illness. Secondly, as a lasting legacy in Hamish's memory. It soon became evident from the way that our ideas for #TeamHamish were adopted by the Community that this had the potential scale to act as a catalyst for the regeneration and revitalisation of Nairn in a wider context. Our initial conceptual ideas and principles were taken from personal experience or recommendations that had been suggested to us - spaces, places and installations that we thought would work really well in Nairn. Whilst our conceptual masterplan covered a broader holistic approach to Nairn's revitalisation, our focus was on the Links area of the town. With our proposal to utilise the Common Good Land, one of our driving principles is that any intervention must be sensitively integrated into the existing topography as an enhancement to its natural context.

### KEY OBJECTIVES

- The regeneration of Nairn as a tourist destination;
- Revitalisation of Nairn for the benefit of its Community;
- Generate more economic activity by increasing the visitor footfall;
- Sensitivity and respect to retain Nairn's beautiful, natural assets;
- Maintained and sustainable.

### PROPOSALS

The strategic premise of these proposals is based on a widely recognised circular tourist route encompassing Nairn's primary features. Whilst access points to this circular tourist route are, of course, flexible, the logical starting point for a visitor to Nairn would be the town centre car park. This point is readily available from the A96, the primary artery through Nairn, and gives direct access to the High Street, but most importantly a pedestrian promenade link to Viewfield House.

We would like to see Viewfield House revitalised to incorporate an upgraded museum, tourist information centre, quality toilets, flexible exhibition spaces, perhaps a small cinema / theatre and a cafe that can take advantage of its beautiful setting in Viewfield. This would offer a different 'parkland' experience to that of the seaside / Links, and a visitor attraction for inclement weather.

The journey from Viewfield to the seafront is just a few minutes; and it is this area of the Links, between the Leisure Centre and paddling pool, that would be the initial focus of our proposals.

Our principle concept is to enhance the existing natural topography with the formation of enjoyable spaces and places that appeal to the broad demographic of Nairn and its visitors. This would see the inclusion of areas for a wide spectrum of activities; from fun, colourful spaces to places that offer quiet contemplation; through to areas that can be multifunctional, educational and even inspirational. Our interventions will be accessible and offer all year round use.

The continuation of our journey around Nairn leads along the beautiful seafront to the harbour, around the riverside path and back into the town centre and High Street.

### COMMUNITY

We believe that this is a Community project. Throughout the last year and a half we have been truly overwhelmed and astounded by the level of support that has been shown to #TeamHamish and we are reliant on the support of Nairn's Community for the ongoing momentum of the incredible fundraising achievements. Additionally, we wish to entrust elements of the proposals to a wide variety of Community Groups within the town for both its design and execution.



- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1 Rainbow 'beach hut' - James's Ice Cream, kitchen, workshop, putting kiosks, studios, shelter | 8 Viewing shelter   | 15 Paths - suitably illuminated, themed directional signage, accessible                                   |
| 2 Main social gathering space - bespoke food seating, tables, shelter                          | 9 Shelter   | 16 Bespoke seating and tables adjacent to improved beach access   |
| 3 Amphitheatre - tiered seating, multipurpose events space, sheltered / partially covered      | 10 Spaces and places to discover - sculptures, water features, art, fables, quiet, contemplative, interactive | 17 Refurbished and extended Links Tearoom   |
| 4 Existing natural wooded area   | 11 Refurbished chess / draughts board   | 18 'Nishish Pad' for use all year round - warmed water, sheltered / partially covered, accessible         |
| 5 Rainbow themed crazy golf  | 12 Rainbow arch 'gateway'   | 19 Upgraded and extended Play Park - multi-age, multi-ability, all weather, sheltered / partially covered |
| 6 Putting Green  | 13 Public Toilets   | 20 Primary Access Points  |
| 7 Adventure play area - natural environment, timber construction, accessible equipment         | 14 Keeping Nairn's Cultural engineering heritage  |   |
- Proposed 'Demonstrator' Projects



- |   |  |                                   |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Fun   | Accessible and inclusive                                   | Play                              |
| Working with the Community  | Enhancement of existing natural assets                     | Harnessing social capital         |
| Destination   | Historic approach for all ages                             | A cohesive journey                |
| Sensitive integration with existing features and natural topography |  |                                   |
| <b>Concept Principles</b>   |  |                                   |
| For all ages and abilities  | Maintained and sustainable for future generations to enjoy |                                   |
| Local artists & sculptors   | Respect for existing trees                                 | Incorporation of local businesses |
| Catalyst  | All year round use   |                                   |



- |                               |                                   |                                       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Creative Landscaping          | Sculpture                         | Quiet and contemplative spaces        |
| Seating and tables            | Access to beach                   | Water features                        |
| Viewing platforms             | Interactive Pieces                | Outdoor musical instruments           |
| <b>Concept Ideas</b>          |                                   |                                       |
| A connection of fables        |                                   |                                       |
| Adventure trail               | Play areas                        | An interactive trail of walks & paths |
| Shelters and undercover areas | Water heated by renewable sources |                                       |
| Events areas                  | Golf                              | Art installations                     |
| Water park                    |                                   |                                       |



# Precedents for Proposed Demonstration Projects - Phase 1

## 2 Main social gathering space - bespoke fixed seating, tables, shelter



La Arcada Courtyard, Santa Barbara, California



Steel Ribbon Bench, Manchester



Metal 'Butterfly' Bench



Metal 'West' Bench



Seaside Cast Stone Bench by Urbastyle



Santa Barbara, California



Esperance Waterfront, Western Australia by HASSELL

## 3 Amphitheatre - terraced seating, multipurpose events space, sheltered / partially covered



Denbigh School, Milton Keynes



Jackson-Triggs Estate Amphitheatre, Niagara, Canada



Proposed Amphitheatre, Bath Spa University



Jackson-Triggs Estate Amphitheatre, Niagara, Canada



Bath Spa University Amphitheatre

## 18 'Splash Pad' for use all year round - warmed water, sheltered / partially covered, accessible



Drusillas Park, Alfriston, East Sussex



Victoria Park, Cardiff



Filmore Thomas Park, Macon, Georgia



Willen Lake, Milton Keynes



Victoria Park, Cardiff

## 19 Upgraded and extended Play Park - multi-age, multi-ability, all weather, sheltered / partially covered



Mission Dolores Park, San Francisco



Robertson Park, Renfrew, Paisley



Le Mee Sur Seine, France



Organic Robina 'The Village'



Kompan Octa Net, Sky Cabin, Tunnel Slide



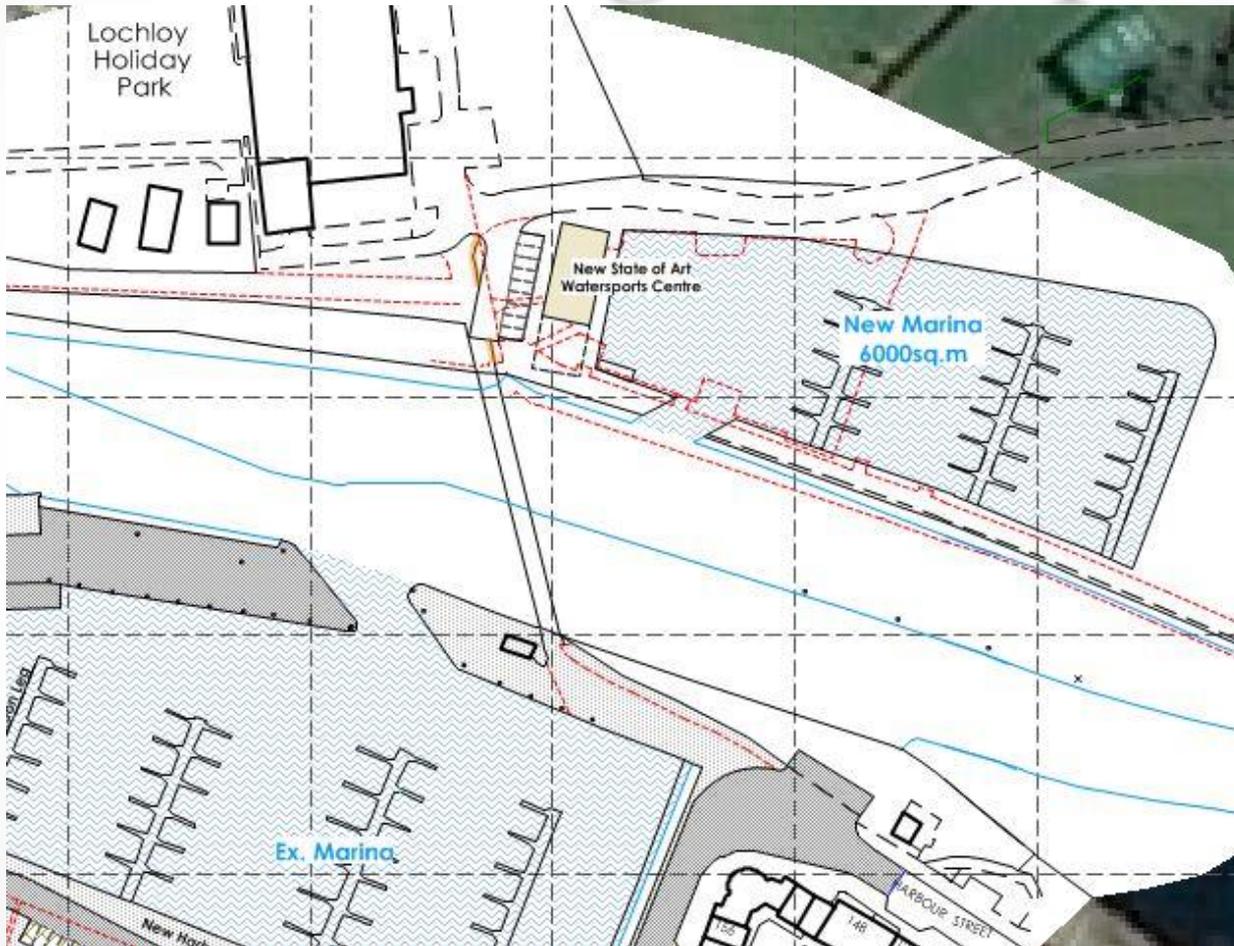
Kompan Organic Robina Explorer Ship



Company Number: SC388110  
Registered Charity Number: SC042118

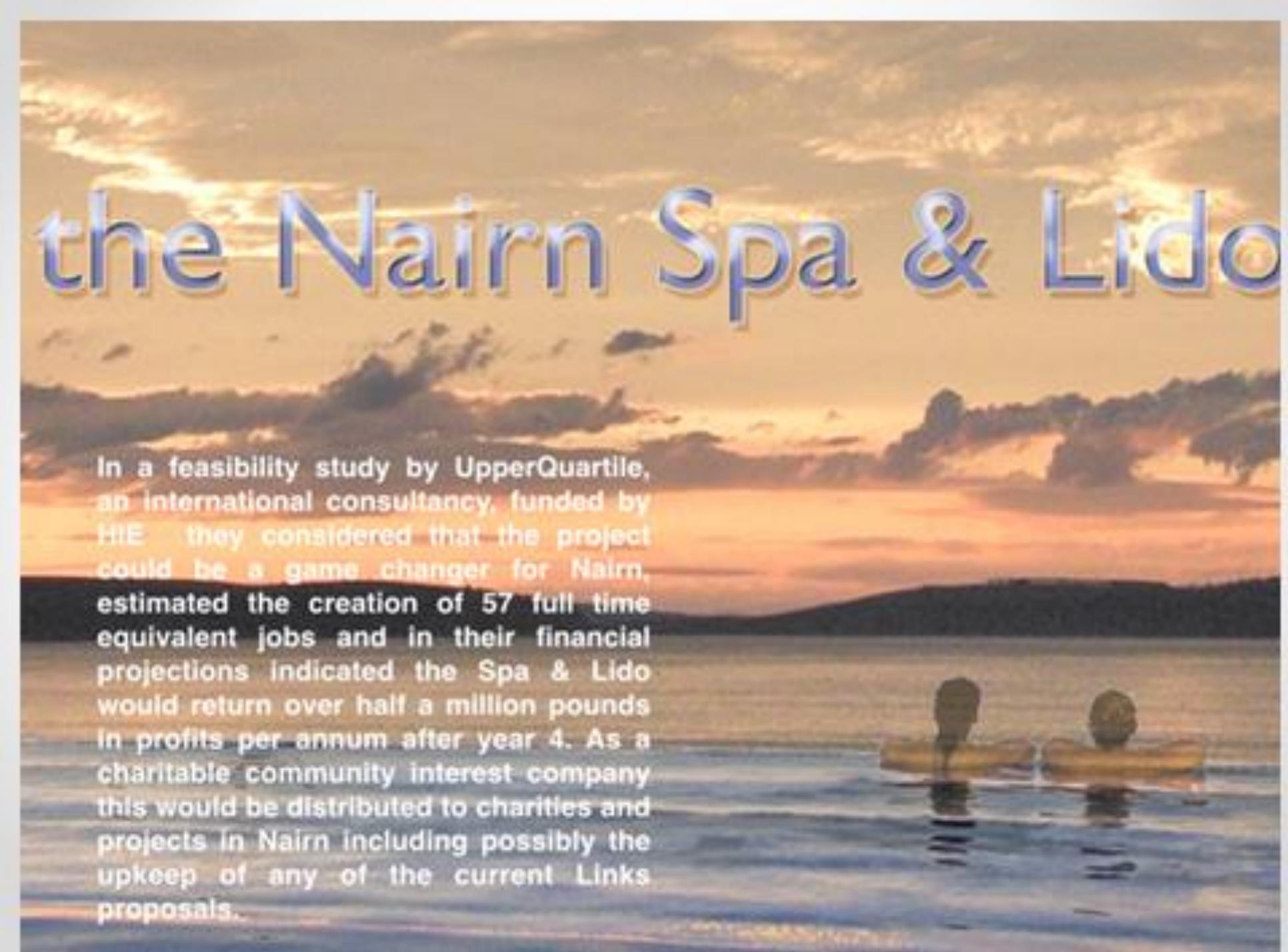


# Nairn Harbour Working Group





# the Nairn Spa & Lido

A scenic sunset over a body of water. The sky is filled with orange and yellow clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. In the foreground, two people are sitting in inflatable rings in the water. The overall mood is peaceful and relaxing.

In a feasibility study by UpperQuartile, an international consultancy, funded by HIE they considered that the project could be a game changer for Nairn, estimated the creation of 57 full time equivalent jobs and in their financial projections indicated the Spa & Lido would return over half a million pounds in profits per annum after year 4. As a charitable community interest company this would be distributed to charities and projects in Nairn including possibly the upkeep of any of the current Links proposals.

lets return to the light and space of the original baths



# NAIRN SWIMMING POOL past, present and future



lets replace the industrial shed with a carapace of photo chromatic and photovoltaic glass

Image © 2017 Getmapping plc  
Image Landsat / Copernicus

# Wetlands Centre Project

## Wetland Habitats



# Volunteering in Nairn

**Getting things done**

# Nairn Community Transport

Nairn Community Transport group runs four minibuses (equipped for disabled access) to serve the local community. It is a not for profit organisation managed by a Board of Directors.



it regularly provides transport for senior citizens, schoolchildren with special needs, sports teams and other local groups. buses also provide a shuttle service for local events such as the Farmers' Show

the operation is supported by Highland Council and administered by staff at the Community and Arts Centre

The Rotary Club of Nairn and the Davidson Trust provided substantial funds for the purchase of the buses. All the drivers are trained and qualified local volunteers who commit to regular weekly shifts.

# KEEPING NAIRNSHIRE COLOURFUL



Local group formed in 2007 following budget driven reductions in Council provision and maintenance of floral displays

Volunteers plant and maintain bulbs and seasonal and perennial flowerbeds in public areas around Nairn, in cooperation with remaining local TECS staff

New display features (floral boat at Harbour, orienteering bed at the leisure park) have been designed to enhance key locations

Local donations and fundraising and grants from Awards For All and the Ward Discretionary Fund, help to cover costs

KNC efforts and local business sponsorship have saved the Council significant costs while continuing to sustain and Enhance the appearance of the town



# Nairn Allotment Society



# Orchard at Sandown



# Viewfield Community Orchard Green Hive



# Nairn PLAY



**Nairn P**reserve **L**ocal **A**reas for **Y**outh - Registered SCIO  
Scottish Charity.

Aims and Goals.....

- Improve Play Park facilities for the local community.
- Fund raising.
- Work with local groups and residents.
- Current focus on Riverside Play Park.



# Men's Shed



# Nairn Sports Club

**Thriving and  
financially self sustaining**

**952 members with 295 youth, 127 over 65  
3500-4000 visitors per month**

**Tennis, badminton, squash, football, badminton, gym**

**Community led and linked**

**Works with schools, GPs, Arthritis Care**

**Disability Support, Duke of Edinburgh Award**

**Coaching for primary schools**

**and local swimming and football clubs**

**Fitness Classes promote**

**healthy lifestyle for all ages**



# **Let's work together for Nairnshire**

## **an offer Highland can't afford to refuse!**

**Nairnshire has**

- **enormous untapped potential**
- **community capacity, skills, and willingness**

**With the right tools and mechanisms**

- **we can achieve a lot together**
- **we can access more resources**

**Support and empower us to take Nairnshire forward**



# Community led funding opportunities

- **BID and Team Hamish – local fundraising with potential to lever in more money to improve local amenities**
- **Asset Transfer /Community Land Fund buy out opportunities**
- **Private sector funding**
- **Enterprise funding ( HIE?)**
- **Charitable funds ( Big Lottery etc)**
- **Crowdsourcing**

# Next Steps for 2019

## Let's do this!

- new structures to help us work together and pool local knowledge/ideas
- more joint CC meetings, locality forums, more local decision making and control
- ongoing dialogue between Nairn Community and HC on local priorities, needs and progress
- better locality data
- effective and timely community consultation
- community engagement training for HC Councillors and Officers
- Remove or cancel HC measures or structures which impede Nairn's economy, growth and regeneration (such as parking charges, tourist tax)