



CAITHNESS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

Meeting Minutes

Location: Microsoft Teams
Date: 26th September 2025
Time: 10.30 – 12.30
Chair: Eann Sinclair

Agenda Items

1	Welcome and Apologies	Eann Sinclair (Chair)
2	Notes from last meeting	Eann Sinclair (Chair)
3	Review of Previous Actions	Eann Sinclair (Chair)
4	Presentations - CSO Renewables – Role & Remit - Planet Youth	Luci Ireland Lindsey Broomfield
5	Priority Action Tracker	Lynn McNeil
6	Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – update	Eann Sinclair
7	Partner/Round table updates	ALL
8	A.O.B	
6	Date of next meeting 12th December 2025 11.00 – 13.00 Microsoft Teams	

Attendees: Eann Sinclair (HIE); Christian Nicolson (NHS); Lynn McNeil (HC); Anne Gillies (WFWP); Alexander Glasgow (TCC); Siobhan Leen (NHS); Kayleigh Nicholson (HIE); Lindsay Broomfield (Planet Youth); Catherine Sapalski (Befrienders Highland); Fiona MacDonald (H&I Climate Hub), Jane MacIntosh (CAB); Allan Farquhar (RBWCC), Amanda Morrison (WFWP); Cai MacIver, (HC); Alistair Jack (CVG); Chloe Saunders (Home Energy Scotland); Fiona Webster (HC Employability); Helen Perkins (NHS); Cllr Karl Rosie (HC); Luci Ireland (HC); Kay MacRae (Police Scotland); Mark Crowe (HC); Richard Griffiths; Siobhan Leen (NHS); Reay Young Stars

Apologies: Cllr Jan McEwan (HC); Wendy Thain (KLICS); Susan Laidlaw (NHS); Suzi Redmond (NHS); Cllr Ron Gunn (HC); Robert Hair

Notes from the last meeting:

Three sets of previous minutes had been sent out prior to the meeting to allow attendees an opportunity to read and amend if needed. No comments or corrections had been submitted. Noting this **ES** proposed to accept the minutes as read, unless any objections were raised. As no counterarguments or objections were voiced during the meeting, the minutes were formally accepted as accurate.

Review of Previous Actions:

All actions from the previous meeting have been actioned and will be covered as we progress through the meeting.

Presentations**Community Support Officer Renewables – Role and Remit****Luci Ireland**

LI introduced her role within the context of the Highland Social Value Charter. She was recently appointed as Community Support Officer for Renewables Engagement with Highland Council. This initiative emerged in response to the growing number of renewable energy developments across the Highlands and the pressure they place on communities. The Charter, launched in June 2024, aims to embed community wealth building by ensuring that economic benefits from renewable investments are distributed. It outlines nine voluntary principles for developers, including community and strategic funds, local investment, skills development, and shared ownership. Luci's role, along with a small team of officers, is to support communities in Caithness, Sutherland, and Easter Ross by facilitating engagement, promoting dialogue, and helping navigate the complexities of renewable developments.

The Community Support Officers act as impartial facilitators between developers and communities, offering guidance, signposting to relevant expertise, and encouraging best practice in community engagement. While they do not negotiate on behalf of communities or respond to planning applications, they help build capacity, promote peer-to-peer learning, and prioritise support for areas facing inequalities or resource limitations. The team is also developing resources to simplify the planning process and improve understanding of renewable energy impacts. Ultimately, their goal is to ensure communities are informed, empowered, and able to engage constructively with developers to maximise local benefits from renewable projects.

To view the presentation please click the link below:



Any questions on the Social Value Charter and the role of CSO Renewables please contact Luci Ireland – luci.ireland@highland.gov.uk

Planet Youth – Lindsey Broomfield

LB, the local coordinator for Planet Youth in Caithness and Sutherland, provided an update on the expansion and impact of the Planet Youth programme. Originally piloted in 2021 across five schools, the

initiative has now grown to include 13 schools across Highland, with support from NHS Highland, Highland Council, and third-sector partners. The programme uses biennial surveys of S3 and S4 pupils to gather data on various aspects of young people's lives, including family, community, leisure, school, peer relationships, and substance use. The data, processed in Iceland where the model originated, informs local action groups and strategic planning. In Caithness, community-led action groups in Wick and Thurso use this data to identify priorities such as reducing substance use (especially vaping), improving mental health, tackling bullying, and increasing awareness of available youth activities.

The 2023 survey revealed concerning trends, including early alcohol use, low mental health ratings, and high rates of self-harm. It also highlighted issues around bullying, social media interactions, and young people's perceptions of safety and belonging in their communities. In response, Planet Youth is facilitating targeted interventions such as diversionary activities through High Life Highland, launching a parent hub for feedback and support, and offering training courses like "Discussing Drugs and Alcohol with Young People." The initiative emphasises collaboration among existing services rather than reinventing them, aiming to build a more supportive environment for young people through shared data, community engagement, and practical resources.

To view the full presentation please click the link below:



For any questions on Planet Youth Please contact Lindsey - lindsay.broomfield@nhs.scot

Priority Action Tracker – Lynn McNeil

LM introduced the updated Priority Action Tracker. This document is designed to serve as the evidence base for the partnership's ongoing and future work. It reflects both new priorities and existing initiatives already underway in Caithness, such as the Whole Family Wellbeing programme and activities reported through the Local Employability Partnership.

One of the key priorities identified is improving access to food and energy resources for individuals and families. This includes expanding community sharing facilities, coordinating surplus food distribution, and strengthening emergency food bank provision. **LM** noted that while HTSI has a food map, it appears incomplete for Caithness, particularly regarding sharing sheds. She proposed compiling a comprehensive list of these facilities and identifying gaps in provision. **AJ** offered to help update the HTSI map once a list is available.

Further actions include supporting children and families experiencing food insecurity by promoting nutritious food in schools and building referral pathways to wider support services. **LM** suggested inviting welfare teams to present on how referrals currently work between schools and support services. Regarding energy poverty, she highlighted the need to engage partners like Home Energy Scotland, CAB, and AliEnergy to promote available support and clarify the status of energy vouchers.

KR provided an update on the Caithness Drugs and Alcohol Forum (CDAF), which he has recently resumed chairing. He acknowledged challenges such as volunteer fatigue and outdated communication channels. Plans are in motion for a refresh workshop to refocus the forum's efforts and rebuild its distribution list. Karl also suggested engaging with Caithness Community Councils, many of which have active sharing platforms.

The tracker also incorporates the Caithness Area Place Plan, which is still in development. **CM** noted that she is currently building relationships and assessing capacity among local delivery partners to avoid duplication and encourage collaboration. Updates on the Adult Social Care and District Plan will also be included, and **LM** mentioned the need to coordinate with Planet Youth to integrate relevant actions.

Another priority is enhancing Caithness's preparedness for emergencies such as extreme weather or grid failures. This involves developing emergency support hubs and community resilience networks. **LM** emphasised that every community council should ideally have a resilience plan. **AJ** offered a template from the Staxigoe area as a starting point, and both **CM** and **KM**, Police Scotland expressed willingness to support this work.

In closing, **LM** encouraged attendees to volunteer as leads for specific actions and to share ideas. The goal is to provide quarterly updates on progress and use the tracker as a working tool by the December meeting. **ES** reinforced the importance of refining the tracker to benchmark the partnership's efforts and invited feedback on its format and content.

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board update – Eann Sinclair

The Highland Community Planning Partnership Board met Friday, with several key items discussed. One of the highlights was the presentation of the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Annual Report and Strategy, which was well received. This aligns with ongoing local efforts, such as the Caithness Drugs and Alcohol Forum, and there may be opportunities for collaboration or support from the Highland ADP in future workshop planning.

A significant milestone was the draft presentation of the Highland Community Planning Partnership Annual Report. The report aims to improve communication between local, regional, and national levels of the partnership. While it doesn't resolve all communication challenges, it marks a positive step in raising awareness of ongoing work across Highland. Once finalised, the report will be submitted to Full Council and shared more widely.

Looking ahead to the December meeting, partners are encouraged to reflect on what is happening across Highland that could be replicated locally. The report will serve as a useful benchmark for this discussion.

Another key topic was community benefits and social value, particularly in relation to the renewables sector, which is highly relevant to the Caithness area. Given the strategic importance of this agenda, it was proposed that social value becomes a standing item on future partnership agendas. The Community Planning Partnership is expected to play a central role in both delivery and communication of this work.

The meeting was chaired by NHS Highland, who continue to provide effective leadership for the board.

Partners/Round Table Updates

Cai MacIver – Community Development Manager – Highland Council

CM introduced herself as the new Community Development Manager for Caithness, joining the Community Development Management Team. Due to a recent team restructure, she will now be working alongside Phil Tomlin and Fiona Richardson, covering Caithness and sharing Easter Ross with Fiona. **CM** acknowledged that some attendees may have previously worked with Phil and Fiona and expressed her enthusiasm about meeting everyone soon, especially at the upcoming Focus North conference next Thursday. She looks forward to working with everyone.

Ann Gillies – Whole Family Wellbeing Programme – Padlet

AG shared progress from discussions with **ES** and others around improving information sharing, after the loss of the Here for Caithness newsletter. **AG** highlighted the use of a Padlet-based public noticeboard currently used by the Local Partnership Network Group (LPNG), which focuses on whole family wellbeing and services for children, young people, and families.

AG proposed either expanding the existing LPNG Padlet or creating a new one for the wider group. Volunteers including **SL**, **LB**, **LM**, and **AG** herself are willing to support this as a subgroup.

She demonstrated the Padlet, explaining its flexibility (public, link-only, or password-protected access) and its usefulness for sharing:

- Meeting dates and collaboration opportunities
- Event info (e.g. *Vision 26* coming to Wick PPP on 28 November)
- Funding updates (e.g. *Caithness Children & Young People's Mental Health Fund, Element 1 funding*)
- Useful resources (e.g. Highland directories, neurodevelopmental tools, trauma-informed practice clips, NHS training prospectus)
- Local initiatives (e.g. Men's Sheds, Caithness Area Place Plan)

She emphasised the Padlet's accessibility for external partners, addressing limitations of Highland Council systems, and encouraged contributions from all partners to make it a collaborative and practical too, but emphasis needs to be on a Whole Family Wellbeing focus. To access the Padlet please click the link below:

[Caithness Local Partnership Network Group \(LPNG\) Whole Family Wellbeing Padlet](#)

Vicky Strange – Community Sports Hub Officer for North Highland – Highlife Highland

VS shared an update on efforts to reinvigorate Community Sport Hubs in Caithness, which had slowed down following COVID and staffing changes. Previously, there were two hubs, one in East Caithness and one in Thurso, but momentum had been lost. Vicky outlined plans to rebuild these hubs by working in partnership with the newly rebranded club Sport Caithness (formerly Caithness Sports Council), expanding the initiative to include North Sutherland. She also described the creation of stronger local networks involving schools, PE departments, Active Schools Coordinators, facility managers, youth development officers, and other key agencies like Planet Youth.

VS announced the launch of the **Get Active Highland Fund**, supported by the London Marathon Foundation, Loch Ness Marathon, Sport Scotland, and High Life Highland. This fund offers up to £5,000 per year to local sport and physical activity groups, with four funding rounds annually. The first deadline is **10 November**, and the fund aims to support new or enhanced activities, particularly those addressing rural challenges. **VS** encouraged anyone working with relevant groups to explore the opportunity and apply.

More information can be found here: [!\[\]\(6bb0e4f14c4133b37d2887cb37e67ddd_img.jpg\) https://www.highlifehighland.com/sport/get-active-highland-fund/](https://www.highlifehighland.com/sport/get-active-highland-fund/)

Siobhan Leen – NHS Health Improvement Team

SL Siobhan Leen shared that the Mental Health Delivery Group, part of the Highland Community Planning Partnership, is currently reviewing its delivery plan, which is nearing its end. Mental health remains a key priority in Caithness and across the Highlands. An event will be held on 11th November in Inverness, offering an opportunity for individuals and organisations to contribute to the development of the next plan and to showcase their mental health-related work through stalls. She also introduced Helen Perkins, the trauma lead, who was present to speak further.

Helen Perkins – NHS Health Improvement Team

HP shared that she is currently seconded for a year to support trauma-informed practice across communities. She sits on the Trauma Champions Steering Group, which feeds into the Mental Health Delivery Group. Her role involves engaging with teams across NHS, third sector, and others, to raise awareness of trauma-informed approaches and explore barriers faced by those affected by trauma in accessing services. Helen invited anyone interested in learning more or discussing how trauma-informed practice could apply to their work to get in touch with her directly.

Helen.perkins2@nhs.scot

Actions

Lynn McNeil	To circulate a request for information on warm spaces, food provision and emergency support across Caithness CP Area – organisations to respond with details for mapping and gap analysis
Lynn McNeil/Alastair Jack	Lynn to collect mapping data from partners and coordinate with Alastair to update and expand the HTSI food map.
Jane Macintosh	Clarify current availability of energy Vouchers
Cllr Karl Rosie	Refresh and relaunch Caithness Drug & Alcohol Forum with a workshop planned for late October/November, update distribution list and invite wider participation, including Planet Youth.
Cai Maciver	Work with HC resilience teams and community councils to develop or refresh resilience plans.
Vicky Strange	Promote Get Active Highland Fund (up to £5,000 per group) – applications due by November 10th

Next Meeting Date:

The next Caithness Community Partnership meeting is scheduled to take place on **Friday 12th December** – via Microsoft Teams from **11.00 – 13.00**.