

# Community Resilience Group Weekly Briefing - 11 19 March 2021

## Employment at the Scottish Parliament Election

With the upcoming Scottish Parliamentary election scheduled to be held on Thursday 6 May 2021, the Highland Council's Election Team need to recruit additional people to work at the election in a polling station or at the count.

The ongoing Covid pandemic means we'll need more staff than usual to run this vital democratic process effectively, as there will be more things to do in the polling stations and the count.

Further information can be viewed on the [Council's website](#) and if you are interested and feel you would like to get involved and play an active role please complete the form [online](#).

If you could share this opportunity through your networks and communities that would be greatly appreciated.

## Polling Station Positions

We are looking for applicants to cover polling duties in the three constituencies in Highland:

- Caithness, Sutherland and Ross
- Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch
- Inverness and Nairn

There are three key roles:

- Presiding Officer - responsible for making sure that voters can cast their vote in secret, free from influence and in a calm atmosphere
- Poll Clerk - assists the Presiding Officers to run the polling station
- Information Officer - greets voters, manage queues and sterilise polling booths and equipment throughout the day

**The counting of the votes** will commence on Friday, 7 May 2021 and are being counted over several days instead of overnight. This year we have 2 counting venues - one at the Highland Football Academy in Dingwall and one at the Inverness Leisure Centre.

We are looking to recruit people to count votes.

The Elections Team need people who will always act impartially, be polite and professional with voters, candidates, agents and other officers.

If you would like more information please email [election@highland.gov.uk](mailto:election@highland.gov.uk)

## **Temporary Closure Business Grants - Deadline**

The Scottish Government announced this week that the Strategic Framework Business Fund grant scheme will close to new applicants on 22 March 2021.

This scheme has provided Temporary Closure Grants for eligible businesses who have had to close during the tier 4 restrictions.

Businesses still have time to apply. For more information please visit [www.highland.gov.uk/strategicframeworkfund](http://www.highland.gov.uk/strategicframeworkfund)

## **B&B and Self Catering Grant Scheme**

B&B's and Self-catering businesses who pay Council Tax, can now for one week only, apply for grant support from the Small Accommodation Providers Paying Council Tax Fund.

Applications are invited between 15 and 22 March from eligible businesses. Grants of £2,000, payable every 4 weeks, backdated to the start of January 2021 are available.

For more information on how to apply and to check whether the business is eligible, please go to:

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/967/small\\_accommodation\\_providers\\_paying\\_council\\_tax\\_fund/2](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/967/small_accommodation_providers_paying_council_tax_fund/2)

## **HERO Grants for Private or Third Sector Employers**

A grant of up to £6000 is available from the Council to help businesses with the costs of recruiting and employing a new member of staff.

The Highland Employment Recruitment Offer (HERO) grant is part of the Council's Economic Prosperity Fund. If you are a private or third sector employer with less than 50 employees in Highland you can apply for a 'HERO grant'.

The fund can cover the costs of employing someone including their wages, training costs, travel or other work-related costs. It is hoped that this grant will encourage employers to take on new staff who are unemployed or who have been issued with a redundancy.

Businesses can visit the Council's website and take the 15 minutes required to read the guidance and to apply using the online form at: [www.highland.gov.uk/HERO](http://www.highland.gov.uk/HERO)

## **Comfort Scheme Providers**

As part of the £1.5 million visitor management investment strategy the Council has agreed up to £60,000 of investment for public toilet provision. In preparation for the upcoming tourist season, we are looking for additional Comfort Scheme providers to complement the existing provision of 74 public conveniences and 36 comfort schemes.

If you run a local business, village hall or hospitality service and are interested in providing facilities for tourists to access, you can sign up to the fixed term agreement for which the Council can provide you with a contribution towards your running costs, depending on the facilities you can offer.

To find out more information on becoming a Comfort Scheme please e-mail Highland Council at [HighlandComfortScheme@highland.co.uk](mailto:HighlandComfortScheme@highland.co.uk)

## **Help Scotland bloom and become more climate and nature friendly**

Community groups across Highland are being invited by environmental charity, Keep Scotland Beautiful, to register and take part in the 2021 Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood initiatives.

Run by the charity in partnership with the Royal Horticultural Society (RHS), the initiatives provide the opportunity for volunteers and groups to gain recognition for their efforts to protect and enhance their local places.

With 2021 being a big year for action on climate change and protecting biodiversity, the optional theme is 'climate and nature friendly' and all groups that register to participate will receive free pollinator-friendly seeds to help create blooming beautiful and #BeeDiverse places.

Registration for Beautiful Scotland and It's Your Neighbourhood is open until 30 April 2021 and more information can be found at [www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org](http://www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org)

## **Vaccination Update**

The latest update from NHS on the vaccine can be accessed at the following link: [www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine](http://www.nhsinform.scot/covid19vaccine)

A stakeholder briefing from NHS Highland is also attached to this briefing

## Food Support for Groups

We know that a number of you continue to provide support to the most vulnerable in your communities and that most of you already have well defined routes for accessing food to provide this support or are supporting individuals to access their shopping or community fridges/food tables.

If you are struggling to access food to continue support to vulnerable people locally, please do contact us through the policy mailbox and we can look at ways that we can support your group going forward.

Contact: [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)

## Resilience Network Contacts

The first meetings of all of the new resilience networks have now taken place. The next meetings are in the process of being scheduled depending upon what was agreed at the initial meeting and dates will be circulated to all within an area.

Where networks are already in place, should any group not already be involved with this network, the contact details for each is below.

- Caithness –If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Alan Tait at Caithness Voluntary Groups [allan@cvq.org.uk](mailto:allan@cvq.org.uk)
- Sutherland – If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Karina Ross at Highland and Islands Enterprise [karina.ross@hient.co.uk](mailto:karina.ross@hient.co.uk)
- East Ross – Helen Ross, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)
- Black Isle - If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Asia Cielecka at [communities@black-isle.info](mailto:communities@black-isle.info)
- Wester Ross and Dingwall – Dot Ferguson, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)
- Skye and Raasay - If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Fiona Thomson at Skye Community Response Development Team [fiona@portreeandbraes.org](mailto:fiona@portreeandbraes.org)
- Lochaber – Emma Tayler, Assistant Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)
- B&S –If any groups aren't involved and wish to be please contact Karen Derrick [enquires@vabs.org.uk](mailto:enquires@vabs.org.uk)
- Inverness City – David Haas, City Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)
- Inverness Rural – Charles Stephen, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network. For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)

- Nairn – Willie Munro, Ward Manager, will facilitate this network For future involvement in this network please contact [policy6@highland.gov.uk](mailto:policy6@highland.gov.uk)

## Helpful Links

Welfare Support Team -

[www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/102970/benefit\\_advice](http://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/102970/benefit_advice)

Self Isolation Support Grant - [www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/940/self-isolation\\_support\\_grant](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/940/self-isolation_support_grant)

Fuel Support Fund

[www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund](http://www.highland.gov.uk/fuelsupportfund)

Energy Advice

[energyadvisors@hi.homeenergyscotland.org](mailto:energyadvisors@hi.homeenergyscotland.org)

AbilityNet - IT advice or support AbilityNet

Helpline 0800 048 7642.

Business Support Grants -

[www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/945/strategic\\_framework\\_business\\_fund](http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/20016/coronavirus/945/strategic_framework_business_fund)

Covid Resilience Grant Support -

[www.highland.gov.uk/directory\\_record/1422811/supporting\\_community\\_resilience/category/155/grants\\_for\\_community\\_groups](http://www.highland.gov.uk/directory_record/1422811/supporting_community_resilience/category/155/grants_for_community_groups)

HTSI Community Group Helpline

Telephone Number 01349 808022

Winter Conditioning reports -

[www.highland.gov.uk/news](http://www.highland.gov.uk/news)