**Community Council e-newsletter. May 2014**

* **Community Council AGM’s:-** A reminder that Community Council AGM’s (as per the Community Council Scheme) should be held annually between the 1st April and 30th June. Accounts should be presented and approved at the AGM meeting and following this, they can be submitted for payment of the annual grant (contact Fay MacRae – fay.macrae@highland.gov.uk ). AGM’s can be held in tandem with a regular meeting with the ordinary meeting following on directly from the AGM.
* **Community Council Accounts:-** Community councils are reminded that accounts will now have to be presented in the new standard format as per the Community Council Scheme appendix 6, p49-51 <http://www.highland.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D455C5BE-DB7C-4406-B10B-500BF4912E40/0/NewCCScheme2013FINAL.pdf>
* **Community Council Minutes:-** A reminder that a copy of all Community Council minutes should be forwarded after each meeting to Fay MacRae – fay.macrae@highland.gov.uk and copied to ward.manager.eileanacheo@highland.gov.uk
* **Discretionary Budget:-** Community Councils are advised that the discretionary budget for this financial year 2014/15 has now been set and it is disappointing to advise the allocation has been cut by £1500. The discretionary budget for 2014/2015 will therefore be £55205. The Elected Members for Eilean a Cheὸ have agreed to keep the Environmental Project Funding available for Community Councils through the Discretionary Budget as per last year’s levels and are as follows:

Portree & Braes £1000

Broadford & Strath £1000

Dunvegan £500

All others £250

To apply for this funding a Discretionary Application must be completed and returned to the address on page 12 of the application. <http://www.highland.gov.uk/yourcouncil/yourward/ward11/ward.htm>

* **Ward Forum:-** The next Ward Forum will take place on **Monday 2nd June from 2.00 – 4.00 pm** at Tigh na Sgire Portree. The headline topics for discussion will be the Next Generation Broadband project, with guest Stuart Robertson, and NHS Highland as part of the formal consultation looking at the modernisation of community and hospital services in Skye, Lochalsh and South West Ross, any questions should be sent to fay.macrae@highland.gov.uk and copied to ward.manager.eileanacheo@highland.gov.uk by 20th May to allow time for Stuart and NHS Highland Representative to prepare a response. Updates will also be provided by both the Police and Fire Services. As before Community Council Chairs, as full Forum members are invited to represent their communities as full partners in the Forum. If Chairs cannot attend then a named second is welcome to attend in their place. The Ward Forum is a formal meeting conducted in public and all are welcome to attend.
* **Highland Council Budget Consultation:-** The first stage of consultation on budget themes will involve a series of budget forums throughout the Highlands.  The Eilean a’ Cheὸ consultation is being held on Monday 2nd June at the Community Venue, Fingal Centre, Portree High School (6.30pm start). This will include the public consultation on the Customer Service Review (including Service Points) agreed at the Council meeting in March and provide an opportunity to promote the Community Challenge Fund.

Specific consultation questions are currently being drafted.  This timing should allow for firm budget proposals to be considered by the Council from December 2014 onwards.

The budget consultation themes are likely to be around:

1. What services should be provided and by whom?
2. How should we provide our services?
3. How can we organise our service provision (including Service Points) in the future to deliver efficiency savings?
4. Can we provide less of some services, some services less frequently or stop providing some services altogether?
5. What more could we do to generate income to pay for services?
6. How do we prevent costs in the future?

Members of the public attending the budget events will also be given information about:

* the scale of the budget challenge, the overall budget situation looking ahead and why we must do things differently;
* how much some services cost;
* what we have saved already; and
* what the public have told us before, how we used that information and why we need their help again.
* **Formal Consultation Proposed Community and Hospital Services SLSWR:-** At the District Partnership meeting held on Monday 12th May it was confirmed that the formal public consultation will be going live from the 19th May 2014 and will run for 3 months. During this time NHS Highland is looking to engage with as many people as possible across all age groups. Community Councils will be given the opportunity to meet in 3 Area groupings and details of dates, times and venues will be circulated in the near future.