

**APPROVAL OF DRAFT ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS TO 31 MARCH
2024 - Report by Chief Executive**

Summary

The purpose of this report is to present the annual report and accounts for High Life Highland for the period ending 31 March 2024.

It is recommended that Directors:

- i. agree the Annual Report and Audited Accounts as detailed in Booklet A; and
- ii. authorise the Chair to sign the Directors Going Concern statement contained in Appendix A of the report.

1. Business Plan Contribution

1.1 High Life Highland's (HLH) purpose is Making Life Better. The HLH Business Plan contains eleven Business Outcomes which support the delivery of this purpose, and this report supports the following highlighted outcomes from the Business Plan:

- 1. Seek to continuously improve standards of health and safety.**
- 2. Commit to the Scottish Government's zero carbon targets and maintain the highest standards in environmental compliance.**
- 3. Use research and market analysis to develop and improve services to meet customer needs.**
- 4. Increase employee satisfaction, engagement and development to improve staff recruitment and retention.**
- 5. Improve the financial sustainability of the company.**
- 6. Value and strengthen the relationship with THC.**
- 7. Develop and deliver the HLH Corporate Programme and seek to attract capital investment.**
- 8. Use research and market analysis to develop and deliver proactive marketing and promotion of HLH and its services.**
- 9. Initiate and implement an ICT digital transformation strategy across the charity.**
- 10. Develop and strengthen relationships with customers, key stakeholders and partners.**
- 11. Deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population and which contribute to the prevention agenda.**

2. Annual Report and Accounts to 31 March 2024

- 2.1 The period covered by the annual report and accounts is the financial year from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.
- 2.2 The draft annual report and accounts is attached as **Booklet A**.
- 2.3 The Directors Going Concern statement is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.4 A copy of Saffery's Management Report detailing the Audit findings is attached as **Appendix B**.

3. Directors Statement

- 3.1 The attention of Directors is drawn to page 45 of the report, and to the importance of ensuring the accuracy of the statement. Although this is signed by the Chair on behalf of the Directors, it is the responsibility of individual Directors to ensure that they have disclosed the required information.
- 3.2 The net deficit for the year ended 31 March 2024 was £236,496.
- 3.3 The total reserves, excluding the pension adjustment on 31 March 2024, was as follows below:

Unrestricted	£245,302
Restricted	£413,879
Designated	£439,715
	<u>£1,098,896</u>

- 3.4 As part of the financial support provided in financial year 2024/25, The Highland Council have requested that HLH expend its unrestricted reserves with a corresponding reduction in Council support.

4. Pensions Asset

- 4.1 Per the valuation provided by the company's actuaries, the pension fund asset has increased from £6,625,000 on 31 March 2023 to £12,993,000 at 31 March 2024. As this asset cannot be realised it has not been recognised within the Financial Statements.
- 4.2 Amanda Webb, Saffery, who will be in attendance at the meeting, will provide an update and full explanation of the pension adjustment - please refer to Note 20.

5. Implications

- 5.1 Resource Implications – there are no new resource implications arising from the content of this report
- 5.2 Legal Implications – failure to agree the content of an annual report and accounts would have serious legal implications. However, Directors are at

liberty to propose amendments to the report as presented by the Chief Executive.

5.3 Risk Implications – there are no new risks arising from the content of this report.

5.4 Equality Implications – there are no new equality implications arising from the content of this report.

Recommendation

It is recommended that Directors:

- i. agree the Annual Report and Audited Accounts as detailed in Booklet A ; and
- ii. authorise the Chair to sign the Directors Going Concern statement contained in Appendix A of the report.

Designation: Chief Executive

Date: 14 August 2024

Author: Neil Johnston, Head of Finance



MAKING **LIFE** BETTER

Report and Financial Statements
Aithisg agus Aithrisean Ionmhasail
31 March 2024 | 31 Màrt 2024

**COMPANY
INFORMATION**
FIOSRACHADH
COMPANAIDH

DIRECTORS

M Golding
T Ligema
M Tate
A Jarvie
D Finlayson
I Campbell
K Nicol
N Finnigan
M Hutchison
R Henry
K Ross
A Millar

COMPANY SECRETARY

S Fraser

AUDITORS

Saffery LLP
Torrison House
Beechwood Park
Inverness
IV2 3BW

BANKERS

Virgin Money
15 Academy Street
Inverness
IV1 1JN

REGISTERED OFFICE

Highland Archive Centre
Bught Road
Inverness
IV3 5SS

Our purpose is to
Make Life Better by
providing affordable access
to opportunities in sport,
leisure and culture across
the length and breadth
of the Highlands.

High Life Highland
A company limited by guarantee
Company Number SC407011
Charity Number SC042593

High Life na Gàidhealtachd
Companaidh cuibhrichte le
barrantas

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43 facilities and services incorporated since 2011

NorthCoast Visitor Centre
Museum Shop
Cafe North
Gallery

The Story So Far An Sgeul gu Ruige Seo

Effectiveness

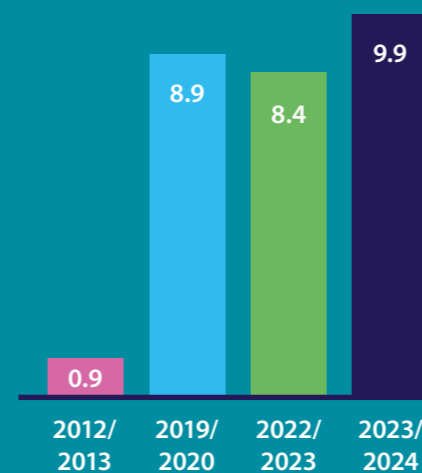
Since it was set up in 2011 High Life Highland has proven to be both efficient and effective in the delivery of public services on behalf of The Highland Council. In 2011/12 it had 2.3 million customer visits across its 9 service areas. By 2023/24 this had more than quadrupled to 9.9m and the services it delivers have become significantly more important to the people of the Highlands than they have ever been.

Enabled savings to The Highland Council since formation

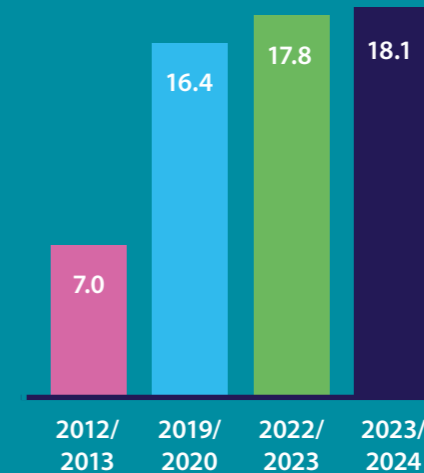
£34,254,860



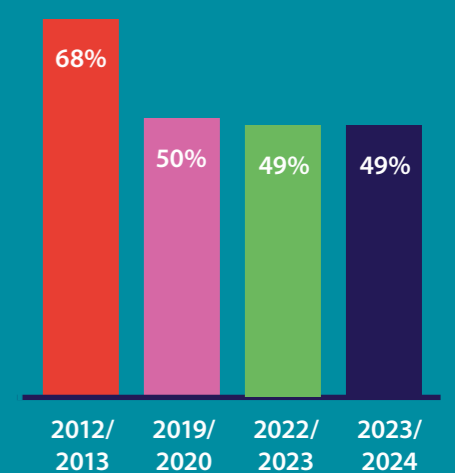
Customer Engagements (Millions)



Income generated (£ Millions)



Reliance on Council Funding



Customer Engagements

Service	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Adult Learning	9,574	13,668	14,318
Archives	1,737,618	1,996,285	2,324,851
Leisure	1,404,952	2,177,826	2,420,276
Libraries	2,575,025	3,514,620	4,497,902
Museums & Galleries	260,752	231,947	224,172
Music Tuition	84,329	105,821	112,487
Countryside Rangers	5,122	11,366	11,857
Sport	252,224	274,822	277,706
Youth Services	54,828	74,595	81,606
Total	6,384,424	8,400,950	9,965,175

Efficiency

As the growth in customer numbers was being achieved, the charity was becoming more efficient – when it was set up in 2011/12 79% of its funding came from The Highland Council and by 2023/24 this had reduced to 49%. This balance of efficiency and effectiveness has enabled High Life Highland to deliver £34m in savings to The Highland Council over 12 years.

Adaptability

Part of the growth has been due to High Life Highland's willingness to adapt, take risks and deliver new services. High Life Highland delivers 9 service areas and has taken on a total of 43 new buildings and services in the 12 years of its existence.

Report of the Chair

Aithisg a' Chathraiche



On behalf of the Board as the incoming Chair, it is my privilege to present the 2023-24 Annual Report for High Life Highland. The Highlands never stand still, change is occurring everywhere as the region becomes more sustainable, prosperous and inclusive.

As the region prospers through the development of the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport and other related inward investments, culture and leisure will continue to play a fundamental part in building and maintaining happier, healthier, more resilient and more productive communities.

The Board has been well advised, informed and supported by the Chief Executive. Our thanks are due to him and his leadership team for delivering on the Boards' strategic intent while maintaining a healthy culture that represents our i-care values. However, it is to our staff and volunteers that the Board wishes to pay particular thanks to, for their strength, commitment, and passion for what they do is the key to our continued success. We are grateful to them for all their efforts.

Throughout this annual review, you will hear about how what we do is making life better for Highland people. Whether it's helping them to access and enjoy learning, art or music, improving their physical and mental wellbeing or providing support throughout health interventions, our commitment to make a difference is unwavering.

Our partnership with the Highland Council has never been stronger. We are working together on significant initiatives including the Inverness Castle Experience and Levelling Up projects, while also refining our service delivery arrangements that will support both organisations to deliver their ambitions for Highland people.

As you read this report, I am confident that you will make discoveries about the scale and impact of what High Life Highland delivers. As well as the significant ambition and action taking place to create a brighter future, as we deliver our purpose – **making life better** for the people of our incredible Highlands.

Michael Golding
Chair

Report of the Chief Executive Aithisg an Àrd-Oifigeir



As one of Scotland's largest Leisure and Culture Trusts, High Life Highland has significant reach across an area covering one third of Scotland. Our corporate performance this year has been hallmarked by growth, both in terms of income and customer engagements.

With our highest ever number of customer engagements over the past year at ten million, we can say with certainty that we have a profound influence on the physical, mental and social wellbeing of communities and citizens across the Highlands.

Across our 9 service areas our colleagues, volunteers and partners have been outstanding in delivering collaboratively to underpin our purpose of **making life better** in everything that we do as a charity.

We are seeing a growing awareness of the benefits of better health and wellbeing among the population, driven by various factors, including increased access to information, advances in technology, and a growing emphasis on preventive actions. This annual review details how our programmes and services put us in a strong position to make a life-changing difference to the people of the Highlands and visitors to our beautiful region.

Furthermore, tourism continues to flourish across the region and with the Inverness Castle Experience on target to open next year, all the hard work in curating the remarkable culture of the Highlands will come together to celebrate all that is special about the Highlands. With its location in the Highland capital, it will take our culture to a worldwide audience and deliver a world-class attraction at the very heart of the region.

We are steadfast in our belief that everyone deserves to live as best a quality of life as possible and in this report, you will see some of the work we are doing to make this a reality. Each example showcases the dedication of our tremendous employees and volunteers, along with the support from The Highland Council and the generosity of our customers, funders and donors.

We look forward to your continued and unwavering support as we remain driven by the strong sense of duty and commitment to our dear Highland places and people.

Steve Walsh, OBE
Chief Executive



Trustees' and Directors' Report – including the Strategic Report at 31 March 2024

Aithisg nan Urrasairean is nan Stiùirichean – a' gabhail a-steach na h-Aithisg Ro-innleachdail aig 31 Màrt 2024

The Trustees, who are also the Directors of the Company for the purposes of Company law, present their report and the group financial statements for the year to 31 March 2024.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland).

Regulations 2006 (as amended), the Companies Act 2006, and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

Formation of High Life Highland Cruthachadh High Life na Gàidhealtachd

High Life Highland is a charitable Company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland. Its registered office address is Highland Archive Centre, Bught Road, Inverness, IV3 5SS (Company number SC407011, Charity number SC042593). It is a subsidiary of The Highland Council, by virtue of it being the sole member of the company and having the power to appoint its Directors. The Company was formed on 8 September 2011 to deliver a range of community learning and leisure services on behalf of The Highland Council and was registered as a charity on 15 September 2011.

It has one subsidiary Company: High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C. (Community Interest Company) (Company number SC408067) whose principal aim is to generate funds which will be utilised by the charity in pursuit of its charitable objectives.



Principal activities and objectives Prìomh ghnìomhachd agus mhion-amasan

The purpose of the Company is to **make life better** through developing and promoting opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure and health and wellbeing

The Company's aim is to be acknowledged and respected as the leading organisation for developing and promoting opportunities in these areas and to grow the business in a sustainable way by providing services that the public value and by being viewed as a trusted partner making the Highlands a better place to live, work and visit.

HLH operates across the Highlands of Scotland, currently within the geographical boundary of The Highland Council's administrative area.

The main business of the Company is the delivery of a Service Delivery Contract for The Highland Council across 9 areas of work;

- Adult Learning
- Archives
- Countryside Rangers
- Leisure Facilities
- Libraries
- Museums and Galleries
- Music Development
- Sport
- Youth Work

Directors Stiùirichean

The trustees, who are also the Directors for the purposes of Company law, who served the charity during the year, and up to the date of signing the financial statements were:

M Golding
T Ligema
M Tate
A Jarvie
D Finlayson
I Campbell
K Nicol
N Finnigan
M Hutchison
R Henry
K Ross
S Rawlings (resigned 1 September 2023)
A Millar (appointed 3 October 2023)

There are no Directors' interests requiring disclosure under the Companies Act 2006.

The Board consists of 8 independent Directors and 4 Highland Council nominated Directors. The retirement and replacement of the Directors is also governed by the Articles of Association.

The Company has a nominations committee, the purpose of which is to oversee the selection of Directors to the Board and to make recommendations for appointment to the Council. In carrying out its function the committee set an appropriate skills matrix to guide it through the selection and evaluation process. Nominations are sought from a range of appropriate sources. Once appointed, Directors undergo induction and training in line with the established recruitment process for Directors.

The strategic management and policy decisions of the Company are the responsibility of the Board of Directors who are elected under the terms of the Company's Articles of Association. The day to day management of the Company is the responsibility of the Chief Executive, Steve Walsh in consultation with the appointed Service Directors; Director of Corporate Performance, Douglas Wilby; Director of Inverness Castle, Fiona Hampton; Director of Culture & Learning, John West and Director of Sport, Leisure & Safeguarding, James Martin. The pay of key management personnel is part of the Highland Council Payscale, subject to NJC national agreement.

The Company has an established Finance and Audit committee, the purpose of which is to assist the Board of Directors in fulfilling its responsibilities with regard to the Company's financial reporting, Audit and the company's internal control procedures including risk management. The Company has a Chief Executive Performance Review Committee whose remit is to agree the annual performance objectives and targets of the Chief Executive.

Our advisors An luchd-comhairleachaidh againn

Our advisors are listed on the Company Information page.

Objectives and activities

Mion-amasan agus gnìomhachd

The Company has identified 11 business outcomes which form the basis of its work. These business outcomes shape and inform the operational plans for each of the 9 services.

The 11 business outcomes identified are:

- Seek to continuously improve standards of health and safety.
- Commit to the Scottish Government's zero carbon targets and maintain the highest standards in environmental compliance.
- Use research and market analysis to develop and improve services to meet customer needs.
- Increase employee satisfaction and engagement through webinars, team meetings, focus groups and newsletters to promote staff development whilst improving recruitment and retention.
- Improve the financial sustainability of the company.
- Value and strengthen the relationship with THC.
- Develop and deliver the HLH Corporate Programme and seek to attract capital investment.
- Use research and market analysis to develop and deliver proactive marketing and promotion of HLH and its services.
- Initiate and implement an ICT digital transformation strategy across the charity.
- Develop and strengthen relationships with customers, key stakeholders and partners.
- Deliver targeted programmes which support and enhance the physical and mental health and wellbeing of the population and which contribute to the prevention agenda.

In striving to achieve these outcomes, the Company has regard to 8 core values:

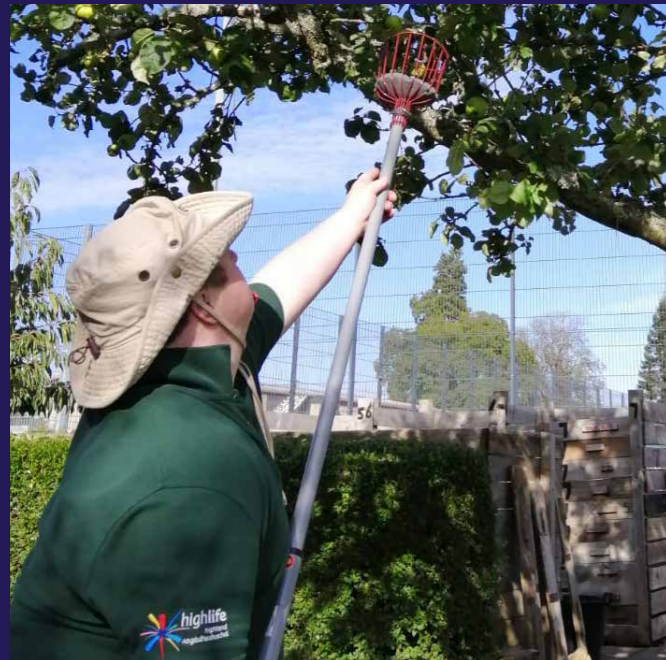
- To act ethically, legally and safely
- To provide quality services, important to individuals and communities
- To balance community, social and financial objectives
- To encourage and enable innovation and entrepreneurship
- To continue to be a good employer and partner
- To reduce the environmental impact of the organisation
- To contribute to achieving zero carbon targets
- To promote diversity and inclusion

On 8 September 2011 the responsibility for the delivery of culture and leisure services on behalf of The Highland Council was entrusted to HLH. The transfer process involved the transfer of the employment of in excess of 800 employees and the assumption of the management of over 117 buildings and 80 open spaces. Ownership of all the buildings and open spaces is retained by The Highland Council. The fixtures and fittings within these buildings were sold by The Highland Council to High Life Highland for £1.

Transfer of management of over
800 employees **117** buildings **80** open spaces



Disabled employees Luchd-obrach ciorramach



The Company and group give full consideration to applications for employment from disabled persons where the candidate's particular aptitudes and abilities are consistent with adequately meeting the requirements of the job.

Opportunities are available to disabled employees for training, career development and promotion.

Where existing employees become disabled, it is the group's policy to provide continuing employment wherever practicable in the same or an alternative position and to provide appropriate training to achieve this aim.

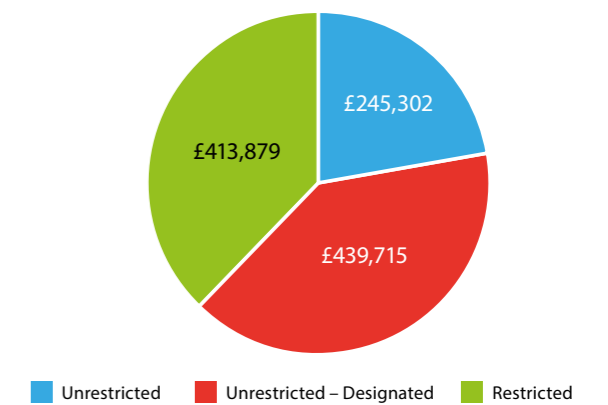
Reserves policy Poileasaidh chùl-stòran

The purpose of the reserves policy is to advance the charitable objectives of the Company with the Directors agreeing a target of 3% of the total budget for reserves.

Following loss of income during the pandemic and substantial inflationary wage increases, High Life Highland has largely expended its unrestricted reserves over the last 3 years. With financial support from The Highland Council agreed for the next 2 years and a review of the service delivery contract and funding formula in progress, it is forecast that the charity will achieve a surplus in financial year 2026/27 facilitating the rebuilding of unrestricted reserves towards the Company's target of 3%.

The total reserves held at year end excluding the unrecognised pension asset of £12,993,000 (2023 – £6,625,000) was £1,098,896 (2023 – £1,335,392), of which £685,017 (2023 – £634,905) was unrestricted and £413,879 (2023 – £700,487) was restricted. Of the £685,017 unrestricted reserves, £139,715 has been designated for capital works at Inverness Leisure following the transfer of business from Inverness Leisure to High Life Highland on 1 April 2016 and £300,000 has been designated for backpay related to the remodelling of the company's pay structure. The uncommitted, unrestricted reserve balance of

£245,302 at 31st March 2024 represents 0.7% of budgeted turnover, £827k below the target of 3%. The following chart illustrates the breakdown of reserves at 31 March 2024:



Total reserves held at year end

£1.1m



Results and Performance Toraidhean agus Coileanadh

Full details of the results are included in the Strategic Report.



Plans for the future Planaichean airson an ama ri teachd

A new Business Plan covering the period to March 2030 is currently being prepared to set out the Company's objectives and plans for the future.

The Business Plan will include priorities for growth, with an Operational Plan to guide activity across the company in a co-ordinated, measurable way.



Investment policy Poileasaidh cur an seilbh

The Directors are governed by the Memorandum and Articles which permit funds to be invested as the Directors see fit.

Review of the Business

Ath-sgrùdadh dhen Ghnothachas

The *highlife* product continues to offer excellent value for money and remains hugely popular with Highland residents.

A focus on marketing the *highlife* scheme to families and corporate customers has led to income levels recovering to pre-pandemic levels with growth in *highlife* membership income increasing over 240% during the period from March 2021 to March 2024. That said, the cost of inflationary pay awards over the last 3 years has created significant financial pressures presenting a challenge in terms of ongoing financial sustainability.

To address these challenges, a review of our contract with The Highland Council is currently being undertaken with the key objectives of affordability, sustainability and joint working to ensure continuity of the services that are so vital to the physical, mental and social health and wellbeing of Highland communities.



Key Areas of Focus

Prìomh Raointean Fòcais

The Board of Directors in reviewing the Company's opportunities for growth and potential have prioritised the following areas:

- Increasing *highlife* subscriptions
- Development of catering
- Increasing donations
- Visitor attractions
- Prevention agenda
- Levelling Up Fund projects

Adult Learning Ionnsachadh Inbheach

Adult Learning provides a range of learning activities in communities across Highland which help with everyday life skills such as reading, writing, using numbers, English as a second language and digital literacy.

Changing Lives through learning – Learner stories:

A Syrian couple were relocated from Syria to Scotland but quickly became socially isolated and tended to spend time at home, inactive and disconnected from the community. They felt constantly fatigued and lacking motivation. The couple had primary school level education from Syria and did not read and write confidently. They started working with their tutor a few times per week at their local HLH community centre. Social interactions with the staff were an important part of their language learning, cultural understanding and social wellbeing. During the summer 2023 instead of learning in the classroom, Imad and Samar started to meet their tutor at Inverness Botanic Gardens. The learners gained confidence placing orders at Café Botanics and interacting with the staff and other customers, using their newly acquired language skills in an authentic way. It's also a place for meaningful social connections to take place; Samar made friends with another Syrian customer.

JR began attending Adult Learning classes in 2022 having been referred by Criminal Justice Social Work for help with literacy and numeracy skills. He found reading and writing extremely difficult and was unable to make sense of simple, everyday written words. JR met his tutor every week, exploring the aspects of life that are made harder by a lack of confidence in reading and writing. He started working on his numeracy skills too – understanding bus timetables and money, things which he avoided using in day-to-day life. As part of his attendance JR was able to deduct hours from his Unpaid Work court order. Even when his Order expired, encouraged by an increased level of independence, JR was very keen to continue learning. He feels more confident, not just in learning but personally and socially too. He has now begun to think about further training and work. He feels a sense of achievement and is looking to the future.

HLH welcomed a newly arrived family from Sudan to our summer Family Numeracy sessions in Inverness. This was a first encounter for 3 generations (grandmother, mother and son) with Scottish education and approaches to numeracy. The grandmother had no experience of formal education, her daughter was due to begin a college course and 6 year old grandson would start school after the holidays. Both grandmother and grandson learned to count 1-20 together for the first time. HLH used interactive games, crafts and baking to practice using numbers in everyday life. The sessions also allowed time to make some friends.



33,144
hours of learning
delivered

English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Some of our learners attend the ESOL language café in Caithness which provides them with much needed social contact within their large rural area community.

34
different
nationalities

23
different SQA
awards offered

Digital skills

An adult learner from Dingwall told us 'I initially came along to learn about smart phones. People take for granted that you know how to use them and sometimes you get left out on a limb. Other people in the group were using computers. I never thought I could be good on the computer but I'm starting to learn how to use mine. My tutor has introduced me to things I'd never done before. I had taken some photos on my holiday which my tutor helped me to save onto my computer and learned about creating an email account. Coming along to these sessions has taught me a lot and provided me with social time I otherwise don't get due to living alone.'

98%
of learners report
improved confidence

Archives, Art and Museums

Tasglannan, Ealain agus Taighean-tasgaidh

Family History – Summer time is always busy for the Family History team as they go out and about a bit more attending events and festivals. The team met up with many people at summer events such as Inverness Highland Games, Arisaig Games and the Highland Field Sports Fair. It's great to chat about all things family history – the infamous 'brick walls', and the services on offer.

The family historian continues to be busy doing commissioned research for those interested in finding out about the lives of their ancestors and producing family trees for customers. Family trees are great for a special present.



2.3m

customer engagements
in our archives service



PLAY!

In recognition of the 35th Anniversary of the Care and Learning Alliance (CALA), popular toys and games from the last few decades were on display for 2 months at Inverness Museum & Art Gallery, rekindling happy memories of childhood. This included a 'Hall of Fame' along with a timeline from CALA exploring 35 Years of Play. Their Community Gallery exhibition ran for the same period.

Inverness Museum and Art Gallery hosts an annual placement of a UHI Fine Art student and Highland Folk Museum hosts a twelve-month Historic Environment Scotland Fellowship trainee.

HLH operated museums offer no-cost family leisure and learning opportunities both day-to-day and through structured activity programmes.



Artist's Talk – 'An Inspired Scavenger'

Leon Patchett

For Leon, preconceived outcomes are generally unhelpful for his process, and he relies totally on what materials he has scavenged. The sculptures that he creates investigate alternative views of the everyday material seen in the natural world. A wonderful exhibition was explored by many and Leon was at the opening to answer questions and talk about why he continues to be 'an inspired scavenger'.

Countryside Rangers Maoir-dhùthcha

The High Life Highland Ranger Service successfully implemented numerous community and school-based educational programmes, significantly contributing to Highland's biodiversity obligations.

One of the highlights was the Highland Meadow Mosaic Project, funded by the Nature Restoration Fund. This project engaged 351 volunteers and 292 school children in creating over 60 wildflower patches, covering a total area of 1,200m². These patches of wildlife refuge, provide crucial habitats for pollinator and other species and were established mainly on Highland Council and High Life Highland sites, as well as on community-owned land.

Wild Escapes, in collaboration with the HLH Museums team, raised awareness about biodiversity loss as part of a nationally important project toward the start of the year; "Shelf Life", in partnership with the HLH Libraries team, educated participants on climate change towards the end of the year. Both initiatives generating greater community understanding and engagement in the twin crises.

Nature Unveiled launched

An online publication that has significantly boosted the rangers online presence and engagement. This platform provides updates on ranger events, citizen science opportunities and insightful information about the natural world in the Scottish Highlands. This coupled with the successful series of natural heritage online talks over the winter season continues to extend the reach and educational impact of the service.

Through these initiatives, the High Life Highland Ranger Service continues to play a pivotal role in community education, biodiversity conservation, and cultural preservation in the Highlands.

98.6%
of good or excellent customer ratings



Gaelic Inclusion In-ghabhail Ghàidhlig

HLH collaborates with THC's Gaelic Team to deliver specific targets and supports the promotion of Gaelic language and culture primarily through its Archives, Museums and Music Tuition services.

Countryside Rangers continue to promote the use of the Gaelic language, incorporating it into their programmes and educational materials. This ensures they maintain links with cultural heritage and language preservation. In 2023/24 they hosted a schools wildflower poetry competition in both Gaelic and English.

Gaelic Sports Leadership Courses are available to young people and resources available for primary school leadership training.

Am Baile, a bi-lingual cultural heritage website managed by the HLH Highland Archive Service has seen increasing customer engagement and in 2023/24 had more than 150k visits. The site has bilingual descriptions of content and new Gaelic content is added on a regular basis using skilled Gaelic translators. In addition, its social media content attracted more than 1.5m engagements.

All interpretation at Inverness Museum and Art Gallery is bilingual and the museum offers two permanent display sections explaining and promoting Gaelic, including an interactive exhibit that gives visitors the opportunity to learn Gaelic words and try out the Gaelic language. At Highland Folk Museum visitors can experience Gaelic language and traditions in a variety of living history settings, including Gaelic psalms singing in the church and regular waulking the cloth demonstrations.

Skye and Lochaber Archive Centres regularly support and work in partnership with Gaelic medium schools in their areas and are also in ongoing collaboration with Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and several community groups undertaking initiatives that aim to sustain and transmit Gaelic language and culture.

The Inverness Gaelic Society Library is housed within Inverness Public Library and Gaelic book collections are also available throughout all Highland Libraries. Regular Gaelic Bookbug sessions (0-4 age rhyme, song and storytelling sessions with parents/carers) and storytelling sessions are delivered from multiple library locations.

Health & Wellbeing Slàinte & Sunnd

The HLH Active Health Programme offers people with a range of long-term health conditions access to exercise classes in leisure facilities which support their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing.

Targeted projects which HLH is delivering which contribute to improving mental health and wellbeing include: falls prevention; cardiac rehabilitation; cancer rehabilitation; older adults health and wellbeing; type II diabetes and physical activity; physiotherapy in leisure centres; pain management; the GP movement and activity programme and dementia friendly initiatives including the museums' service led "House of Memories".

The "You Time" programme is delivered across Highland and includes activities delivered by archives; leisure facilities; libraries; countryside rangers; and is supporting older people to sustain and improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing and reduces social isolation and loneliness.

Inverness Museum and Art Gallery has a long-standing relationship with the mental health charity Keltic Care, whereby some of its service users are supported to therapeutically engage with the visual arts. There are over 1800 *highlife* members taking part in HLH's targeted health and wellbeing programmes.

Inverness Botanic Gardens Gàrraidhean Luibh-eòlais Inbhir Nis

The now Inverness Botanic Gardens was first opened in 1993 as the 'Inverness Floral Hall and Gardens' by Provost W.A.E. Fraser and later by HRH Prince Edward. To celebrate the incredible history and people involved in the Inverness Botanic Gardens through the years, a 30th Anniversary Celebration was held in September 2023 for High Life Highland staff, volunteers, and guests. Many were in attendance, including several long-serving volunteers from the GROW Project, who have witnessed the development of Inverness Botanic Gardens for over two decades.

Invited along to provide live music throughout the evening were local music ensembles 'Strumness Ukuleles' and Tain Royal Academy's 'Gizzen Briggs', organised by Norman Bolton, High Life Highland's Head of Music Development. "Like the plants at Inverness Botanic Gardens, it's a pleasure to see so many young Highland musicians 'grow' as they develop their musical skills and participate in these events through High Life Highland's Instrumental Tuition Service." All this happened across the glass houses where Inverness Botanic Gardens were also hosting their first ever art exhibition, 'Living with SMART' by Brandon Gunn and Evija Laivina.

Ewan Mackintosh, Facility Manager added: "The team at the Inverness Botanic Gardens were just thrilled to be hosting colleagues and friends for an evening of deserved celebration. Every day is different in the Gardens. The sights, sounds and smells change with the weather and seasons, but the beauty remains constant. Entering the Tropical and Cactus house transports you to the other side of the world and the outside area showcases the best of Highland horticultural. I love the contrast when you enter the GROW Project. It's wild, free range, and experimental. It's all about growing people rather than the plants. I feel very lucky to be part of such a lovely community of passionate people and can't wait to see what the next few years bring."

Installed around the space were a number of informational boards, showing fascinating and insightful archive material from the Inverness Highland Archive and Registration Centre (IHARC) along with interpretation from renowned historian and author Norman Newton.



Inverness Castle Project Pròiseact Caisteal Inbhir Nis

The Rose Window, created in 1867 for the Methodist Church in Inverness, has begun its restoration process in the hands of experts from Iona Art Glass, specialists in conserving and restoring stained glass. The window will become a focal feature within the interior design for the new Inverness Castle Experience visitor attraction, opening in 2025.

November saw the first major phase of work started to install a new universally accessible roof terrace, which will form part of the visitor experience at Inverness Castle, involving the careful removal of an original section of a concealed slate roof and the installation of a new structural deck in its place. The roof steel will be lifted and lowered in through a pre-prepared opening in existing roof structure. As a temporary measure only, part of the existing roof will be retained to avoid opening the full area of terrace to the inclement weather. The new deck, which will be craned into place behind the parapet over the main entrance of the former courthouse, will provide visitors with unparalleled views across Inverness and down the Great Glen. Access to the new terrace will be via a new public lift, which is currently being installed discreetly within the historic fabric. In addition, and at the same time, a new circular steel frame was craned in through the same roof opening. The circular frame will be positioned in the room below the new roof terrace to hold the historic Rose Window, which is currently undergoing careful restoration away from site.

Workhaus Projects were awarded the contract to carry out the interpretation for the interior of the Inverness Castle Experience. Workhaus Projects will combine creativity, design, technology and craftsmanship to create a world-class visitor experience within the transformed castle building, bringing the vision of content designers Mather & Co to fruition. The result will be an immersive and educational experience that will engage and delight all visitors. Workhaus Projects has been working within the museum, heritage and visitor attraction sector for over two decades, transforming spaces into memorable visitor experiences.

The main construction contract remains on programme and within budget. Work on the North and South Towers is at an advanced stage and work to create the new link building continues. The fit-out contractor, Workhaus, continue to build the sets and to create the content for each space. Work has commenced to create the audio-visual content using locally based Highland artists. The recruitment of the Head of Inverness Castle Experience has commenced, with an anticipated appointment in December 2024. The Retail Consultant has been appointed and will begin phase one of their contract in July to research the local market. The opening date is still set for summer 2025. <https://vimeo.com/991508712>



Libraries Leabharlannan

HLH library staff deliver an extensive programme of activities to support early years literacy and numeracy, including Bookbug sessions and early years/family STEM activities. Book collections to support reading for learning and recreation are provided in both hard copy and digital format. Libraries also support learning and teaching through the provision of the school library service. HLH Libraries offer no-cost family activity programmes that support literacy, STEM learning, digital and social inclusion.

HLH Libraries enjoyed 4.5 m customer engagements during 2023/24. This included 1.9 million visits to library buildings, a 33% rise in comparison to the previous year. Virtual footfall resulted in 2.6m visits, a 13% rise from the previous year.

330,000 customers took part in library events during 2023/4, a 27% increase since 2022/23. Wide and varied activity programmes took place within library buildings and the service was also present at community events such as the Belladrum festival. The delivery of Bookbug sessions, storytelling, Lego workshops and craft activities resulted in the service engaging with over 3400 people during the festival. HLH received lots of positive feedback from families. Some commented that they appreciated a 'chill out space' where children and adults could benefit from 'down time' amongst the bustle of the music festival.

Libraries' partnership with UHI was further enhanced during 2023/24 by the development of a Poetry Prize for students. Submissions were open to all active UHI students with entries on the theme 'My Life in the Highlands and Islands'. Selected for first prize was Wick-based, 16 year old home-schooled student Florence Morton-Armer. The competition aimed to encourage a love of literature as well as celebrating emerging writing talent.

Libraries provide free public access computers in sixty locations across the highlands which is a significant contribution to social inclusion. In addition there is free Wi-Fi in all libraries.



High Life Highland

Levelling Up Ìre suas

Three projects along the River Ness will boost the city's sport and cultural attractions, preserve key heritage assets, help attract more tourists and assist in achieving net zero carbon targets. The Levelling Up Fund projects are delivered in partnership by The Highland Council and High Life Highland.

The Castle Street Energy Centre, a key city centre regeneration project, featured in a visit to the area by UK Government Minister for Scotland, Malcolm Offord (September 2023). The visit by Minister Offord to see the developments came following work having started on the Castle Street Energy Centre, in recent weeks, as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund.

Clark Contracts were awarded the contract for improvements to Bught Park in Inverness at end of October 2023 as part of the UK Government's Levelling Up Fund. The project will move on to the next stage of development which includes a refurbished grandstand, a new sports pavilion, a new shinty experience and improved infrastructure for large-scale outdoor events. This work will transform Bught Park for locals and visitors while reflecting its rich sporting history as a centre for shinty.

The Northern Meeting Park refurbishment project in Inverness got underway in January. Lead contractors, Morrison Construction – Highland, employed by The Highland Council, commenced some enabling works, prior to Christmas, within the park area, to erect tree protection fencing and site office installation. The full construction works have a planned completion date of December 2024. The works will comprise: refurbishment and preservation of the Victorian grandstand; improved access to city centre green space; enhanced sporting and cultural facilities; a new community pavilion and improved infrastructure for local and major events.

almost
£20m
awarded from the
UK Levelling Up Fund



Leisure Cur-seachad

High Life Highland runs a learn to swim programme which had an average of **4,700** participants per month during 2023/24

HLH seeks to support families by offering an all-inclusive leisure subscription which is one of the best value in the country and covers a whole household (two adults and children under 18). Children's activities, gym, swim group fitness single court activities (such as badminton) and swimming lessons are included in the subscription.

HLH provides modern apprenticeships through its leisure facilities which support young people who wish to remain in Highland and develop their careers at home.

High Life Highland runs a learn to swim programme which had an average of 3,208 individual participants per month during 2022/23. This number increased to 4,700 in 2023/24.

As part of a continuing programme, upgrades have been completed at Black Isle Leisure Centre, Inverness Royal Academy Sports centre, The Badenoch Centre, Lochaber Leisure Centre and Aviemore Community Complex.



Aviemore Community Complex

Our investment and gym upgrades further enhance High Life Highland's commitment to providing our members with a world-class fitness experience, in line with the Charity's proposition of making life better. The investment in new equipment is part of an ongoing initiative to upgrade gyms across High Life Highland's network and bringing the latest in fitness technology and innovation to the centre, which has seen participation grow by over 21%.



Membership and Promotions Ballrachd agus àrdachaidhean dreuchd

High Life Subscriptions increased by **1,184** from April 2023 to March 2024

Corporate Memberships

The corporate membership subscription increased from 2782 in March 2023 to 3554 to April 2024 with 33 new corporate clients.

We also entered into an agreement with Epassi – My Gym Discount and Gym Flex to provide gym membership to national companies such as Whyte and MacKay, Boots UK, Yahoo Limited, Medicash, Accenture to name a few.

Membership Campaigns

HLH continues to deliver an extensive range of membership campaigns designed to attract new audience to our leisure facilities and retain our existing members:

- Refer a Friend
- Wellness Wednesday
- Ten days for £10.00.
- Happy 18th Birthday (ongoing)
- UHI Freshers Month
- National Fitness Week
- Every Membership Counts
- Bring a Buddy
- Be Active to Thrive

In addition, there is a specific scheme for families in receipt of income related benefits whereby the adults and children can access activities for fifty pence per visit.



British Weightlifting Level 1 Award

Recently some of our teams from various facilities throughout Highland went through the British Weightlifting Level 1 award. Strength and conditioning is becoming more and more popular and it's important to HLH that we invest in our teams to continue to learn and develop in these areas. The course covered the process and principles of coaching weightlifting and understand how to effectively deliver aspects of coaching as well as enhance knowledge and ability for delivery of our strength inductions across our facilities. Benefits to our customers include provision of good quality strength inductions as well as some sites providing lifting classes. This training also assists with all the developments happening across the charity.

Music Development Leasachadh Ciùil

High Life Highland's first ever Rock Week took place in the Easter Holidays at Dingwall Academy. Pupils were split into 4 different bands with the help of tutors and had until the Thursday to come up with a complete set of new songs with a view to performing to family and friends at a concert in aid of Mikeysline on the Thursday evening. Straight away it was obvious to see the huge amount of talent on show and their willingness to collaborate and work outside their comfort zone. The 4 days went on to be a roaring success and really highlighted the amount of talent amongst many of the region's young rock musicians. Everyone rose to the challenge and pressure of being placed in a band with new people and playing new songs. The bands all performed a top quality set at the concert much to the delight of the audience. The concert was very well attended by family and friends. The concert raised around £500 for Mikeysline.

In June over 300 audience members were treated to an extravaganza of wind band music from 100 young musicians from all over Lochaber at the Lochaber High School Wind Bands' Summer Concert. We heard music from the three Band Classes at Inverloch Primary School and in a first the Primary 7 band class were invited to perform with the LHS Junior Wind Band. Another first was the performance of some very young musicians (primary 3!) also with the Junior Band. The band journey continued out to Mallaig with performances by both S1 and S2 Mallaig High School Bands demonstrating the wide geographical area that the High Life Highland Instructors cover on a weekly basis.

Practice-a-thon 2023

Many HLH instrumental pupils participated in a 2 week sponsored practice event in November and raised a little short of £10k. HLH delivers music tuition free of cost to all our registered pupils but the money raised from this event went towards continued support of the many additional performance opportunities and experiences HLH are able to offer Highland pupils. We are extremely grateful for the support.

Highland Young Musicians – Concert Festival 2024

HYM made a triumphant return to Eden Court in Inverness in March to a sell-out audience. This was the first time the groups had performed their Concert Festival in Eden Court since March 2016 and was a great experience for all involved. Performances were of a very high standard and a high quality of musicianship was demonstrated across all of the groups. A special mention goes to the Highland Regional Youth Orchestra (HRYO) as this was the first time the symphony orchestra had performed since March 2019 (their 2020 performance was cancelled due to the Covid Pandemic). The orchestra was conducted by former HYM member Tomas Leakey.

4,200
undertaking music
tuition in October



High Life Highland

Sport Spòrs

Highland Disability Sport's Junior Gala took place in September at Inverness Leisure. This event was open to swimmers aged 10 to 17 years old with a learning disability, physical disability, or a visual or hearing impairment. The event took place with support from HLH's Disability Sports Development team whose core aim is to lead the way for Sport and Leisure activities in the Highlands regardless of age or ability. Participating swimmers all fulfilled the prerequisite of being able to swim 25 metres without touching the floor or sides of the swimming pool, and without any physical assistance from people or the use of flotation aids.

All 8 Primary Schools across East Sutherland were represented at the East Sutherland Schools Sports Association (ESSSA) Benchball Tournament on 3rd October, hosted at Golspie High School. A total of 14 teams entered: each category played in a 'round robin' competition with games lasting 5 minutes each. To get through a total of 31 games, there was a swift turnaround after each game and onto the next. Four Sports Leaders from Golspie High School took on the role as referees, as well as 2 peripatetic PE primary staff. HLH's Active Schools Co-ordinator who assisted with the organisation of the event, said: "It was great to see all schools represented, and so many teams entering, with pupils mixing with other schools in East Sutherland. The atmosphere at the event was electric! There was so much encouragement and cheering from the teams' families, teachers, and fellow pupils. The pupils have been busy training during school time and at lunchtimes with the help of some Active Schools volunteers. This contributes directly to getting more children more active.

Active Schools Co-ordinators from across East Ross and East Sutherland hosted the first of 6 Cross Country races at Inver Primary School in November. Around 140 pupils attended the event, with ages ranging from P4 to P7. The first 10 runners from each race were awarded with a medal as they crossed the finishing line. Ross-shire Active Schools Cross Country series is a very successful event and participation has grown massively over the years. It started with 45 pupils and now regularly has up to 200 pupils at one event! We want to be able to recognise the runners at these events for giving it their all, while also promoting the core aims of Active Schools: more children, more active, more often.

The Community Sport Hub Programme continues to provide support for community based sports clubs and activity groups. The 13 active community sport hub projects supported 162 community organisations in the 23/24 financial year, an increase of 50 organisations from the previous year. These community based groups provide vital sustainable opportunities for people to take part in sport and physical activity opportunities in their local communities.

Family friendly sessions are being delivered and developed through Active Schools with an emphasis on recruiting and supporting parent volunteers to deliver activities to young people.

277,706
attendances



Report and Financial Statements | 31 March 2024



Youth Work Obair Òigridh

7,558
programmed activities
delivered

Youth work staff provide opportunities for young people to gain achievement awards – Youth Achievement Awards; Dynamic Youth Awards; Hi5 Awards; Saltire Awards; John Muir Award; SQA awards and Duke of Edinburgh Awards which are of significant benefit for young people in gaining employment or higher and further education places. A 72% increase in awards gained through youth work over the last 2 academic years has taken place with over 1500 awards achieved in 2023/24.

HLH Youth Work provides both targeted and ‘open to all’ opportunities for young people to: Get Involved, Get Heard and Get On.

Fort William Street Work

HLH support young people on a Friday and Saturday night and extra support sessions when required by partner agencies such as Police Scotland and Social Work. Meeting young people in their environment, on their terms, for support enables a more equal, respectful rapport between staff and young people, especially in challenging situations.

Sutherland Inclusivity Day of Activities; April 2023

A multi-agency approach, led by Youth Development Officers, planned and provided a day of activities for young people with additional needs from all over Sutherland and Caithness. Lairg was the chosen location as it was central to most and provided a variety of options to offer a wide range of activities such as canoeing on the loch, football, Nature walks, Boccia, arts and crafts, and a great space for lunch. 16 young people attended with their families and enjoyed all that the HLH teams offered i.e. Countryside Ranger, Active Schools, Youth Development, Disability Sport, Outdoor Learning. Staff from other agencies such as Children Services Workers also supported the event. Feedback was very positive from the young people, parents and carers which helped greatly in planning for the event in April 2024 which was even bigger and better with 27 young people attending.

Highland Youth Parliament Conference

80 young people representing all 9 Community Planning Partnership areas attended the annual Highland Youth Parliament Conference. This included an Education Q&A with senior Highland Council officers and key Elected Members.



Leadership Programme

6,650
young leaders have come
through the programme

793
have registered in
this academic year

628 Hoodies awarded this academic year

- 4 Platinum Hoodies (new for 2024)
- 23 Gold Hoodies
- 39 Silver Hoodies
- 16 red Hoodies
- 75 Green Hoodies
- 196 Purple Hoodies
- 397 Navy Hoodies

There were also 260 T-shirts awarded

This amounts to at the very least 42 650 leadership hours

SCQF HLH Choose To Lead Awards

156
Level 4 Reg | 82 passed
74 ongoing

52
Level 5 Reg | 21 passed
31 ongoing

Junior Leadership – Primary schools

795
junior leaders trained

- 745 Junior Leaders/ Games Leaders
- 27 Football leaders
- 15 Dance Leaders
- 2 Basketball Leaders

Movers & Shakers Dance Leaders

302 Young Leaders trained
35 Junior Leaders trained

47 Young leaders and **8** Junior Leaders
delivering to over **105** children over
19 Primary Schools

Gaelic Leadership

9 Young Leaders took part in the
“Choose To Lead in Gaelic” residential

Making Life Better – Partnership Working

A' dèanamh beatha nas fheàrr – obair com-pàirteachais

Health Partnerships

HLH is working with NHS Highland to improve the support and management of patients with hip and knee osteoarthritis throughout Highland.

The types of physical activity which are recommended for people with osteoarthritis include strengthening and aerobic exercises. HLH offers a wide range of classes across the leisure programme which are accessible to people affected by osteoarthritis which involve strengthening and aerobic exercises. In addition to this a number of HLH Tutor Coach colleagues have been upskilled and trained to deliver pain management exercise classes (called ESCAPE-pain) which are specifically designed for people with osteoarthritis – these classes have been delivered by HLH since 2021.

A new referral pathway is now being scoped to enable clinicians to refer any suitable patients to HLH classes in leisure centres to improve their outcomes when they are affected by osteoarthritis. The pathway is at the early stages of development and it is likely to include opportunities for clinicians to refer patients to HLH at a variety of stages of their treatment – e.g. when they are getting treated in Primary Care as well as when they have been referred to Secondary Care including when they may be waiting for a procedure (such as a hip/knee replacement) to help ensure their optimum condition prior to treatment.

In collaboration THC and HLH have developed an initiative called Mental Health Reps to promote positive mental health in the workplace, support and comfort any employee experiencing mental health difficulties, encourage conversations on mental health, support employees through a mental health crisis, and signpost to appropriate support.

HLH is supporting the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) work to deliver the Suicide Intervention and Prevention Programme (SIPP) training. SIPP is led by the Health Improvement Team within Public Health in NHS Highland and supported by all community planning partners. HLH colleagues, from a range of HLH services, have been trained as trainers to deliver the SIPP programme and are co-delivering, with colleagues from various Community Planning Partners, as part of the Highland wide training roll out across Highland. SIPP training aims to improve awareness of suicidal thinking, increase confidence to ask someone if they are feeling suicidal, and to support them to seek further help, the training is open to anyone to attend participate. Local partners, including the Samaritans and James Support Group promote and deliver services through libraries

HLH Youth, Sport and Leisure services are working jointly with NHS Highland and the Highland Alcohol and Drugs Partnership on the Planet Youth Initiative. The pilot project based around Tain, Dornoch, Golspie and Caithness will focus on early intervention and using sport and physical activity as a preventative measure.

Specialist exercise classes for people affected by Parkinson's disease are being offered in a range of leisure centres and online. These classes have been developed in partnership with Parkinson's UK and NHS Highland.

The GP Movement and Activity Programme is testing how collaborating with primary care in NHS Highland can help people to experience everything *highlife* offers to benefit their physical, mental and social health and wellbeing. As part of the initiative participants can be signposted to HLH leisure services and offered a free 7 session pass to a leisure centre to help improve all aspects of participants health and wellbeing.



HLH is represented on the following national organisations:

- Community Leisure UK
- Youth Work Managers Scotland
- CLD Managers Scotland
- Music Education Partnership Group
- Scottish Libraries and Information Council

Making Life Better – Partnership Working

A' dèanamh beatha nas fheàrr – obair com-pàirteachais

Museums

HLH are delighted to have launched the museum's own profile on the SmARTify app, in partnership with XpoNorth Digital. HLH have created a tour of our 'Top 10' objects for visitors to enjoy and are continuing to populate this space with images and information so people at home can also view our collections.

HLH, working with third sector partners, created the 'House of Memories', an App based resource which benefits people living with dementia and their carers to access museum collections. The Museums service regularly collaborates with Alzheimers Scotland and the Badenoch Shinty Memories project to offer a range of enjoyable and beneficial opportunities to people living with dementia and their carers.

Youth Work

The HLH Youth work team is hosting and supporting a team of Development Officers on the My Future My Success project in partnership with THC working together to increase the number of positive destinations in Highland for school leavers.

BID

Working in partnership with Inverness Botanic Gardens to beautify the City and Oban with over 900 hanging baskets.

Inverness Botanic Gardens

High Life Highland is delighted to announce a number of generous donations from the Inverness branch of EJ Parker to the Inverness Botanic Gardens. These donations include the instalment of energy efficient heating improvements, as well as funding towards the GROW and BEE Projects.

Ranger Service

Alongside the NHH Health Improvement team and Nature.Scot, the HLH Ranger Service were partners to the Highland Green Health Partnership under the branding "Think Health Think Nature," aiming to encourage outdoor activities to tackle physical inactivity, improve mental health, and address health inequalities.

HLH Rangers Service were partners to:

- The Highland Adapts initiative which includes HIE, Changeworks and Nature.Scot, Highlands and Islands Climate Hub and facilitates transformational action towards a prosperous, climate-ready Highland. We aim to promote community action for healthy ecosystems and nature-based solutions to climate change.
- The Highland Environment Forum (HEF), which includes Highland Council, NatureScot, and Scottish Forestry, acting as key delivery partners for the Highland Nature: Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2026, guided by HEF's Biodiversity Working Group and supporting the Edinburgh Declaration (2021).

The Ranger Service and Museums Service were partners to Edinburgh University and UHI on "Programme 6," testing an early mental health intervention referral model in the Highlands, based on a successful model from Edinburgh.

The Ranger Service partnered with Connecting Carers to deliver green health programme to carers throughout Highlands

The Ranger service received external grant funding from Lochaber Ward Fund, Nature Restoration Fund & Highlands and Islands Climate Hub in 2023/2024.

Making Life Better – Partnership Working

A' dèanamh beatha nas fheàrr – obair com-pàirteachais

Libraries

In recognition of National Suicide Prevention Week, High Life Highland partnered with the Samaritans to raise awareness of the importance of Samaritans services for those who need it most. One way in which this partnership has taken form is in the dissemination of free bookmarks to HLH's Libraries across the Highlands. These bookmarks contain the contact details for Samaritans and serve as reminders that there are people who are here to listen when times are tough.

By helping Samaritans to raise awareness of the services it offers to Highland communities, even in the small but gentle and useful form of a bookmark, we can together work to prevent suicide.

Net Zero, Energy Investment and Innovation

There is a strong partnership between the THC's property and energy teams and HLH. Over the years there has been significant investment through the SALIX and other property funds for investment in energy efficiency, biomass, LED lighting, solar, etc. These have all returned savings to THC budgets and along with asset rationalisation will continue to be an important part of future work between the two organisations.

Staff and Communities

The cost-of-living, including energy prices, is worrying for everyone. To ensure that the right support can be received High Life Highland partnered up with Home Energy Scotland to offer information-sharing sessions open to all HLH members of staff. These sessions were designed by Home Energy Scotland to provide impartial advice on saving energy, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, cutting water waste at home, and more. However, the core aim of delivering these sessions was to ensure that the wellbeing of HLH staff is supported.

HLH has played a supporting role with the Council and other partners in providing locations at its facilities for sustainable transport including cycle racks, e-bike storage/charging and car charging points.

HLH staff, learners and partners have worked together with THC staff to increase the range of voices and influences contributing to the current development of the East Ross Place Plan. This has been with particular emphasis on marginalised and vulnerable groups and has benefitted from community engagement due to the wide partner use of HLH facilities in the area including Joss Street Hall Invergordon and the Alness Youth Centre.



Making Life Better – Partnership Working

A' dèanamh beatha nas fheàrr – obair com-pàirteachais

Leisure

Leisure have been working in partnership with Inverness Chamber of Commerce for the past 12 months to enhance our visibility and reputation in the business community. This has enabled us to grow our network to promote the opportunity for businesses to invest in their employees' and employee's family's health and wellbeing by becoming a corporate membership client. Our aim is replicate the success of the relationship that we have built with the Inverness Chamber of Commerce with Caithness Chamber of Commerce, Lochaber Chamber of Commerce, Cairngorm Business Partnership and Prosper.

Leisure have recently been working with a consultant on specific challenges this sector faces.

HLH, The Highland Council, Lawn Tennis Association have worked in partnership to invest in and refurbish public park tennis courts in Bellfield Park. Investment of £192,000 helping ensure that quality facilities continue to be available to the local community.

HLH have worked in partnership with RLSS to develop our local tutor workforce training up 12 Probationary Trainer Assessors.

Working with Fitness Training Scotland, HLH have developed staff through provision of numerous training courses to enhance what HLH delivers.

Scottish Swimming – developing our swimming teachers throughout Highland through the SSTQ (Scottish Swimming Teaching Qualification).

Active Schools & Community Sports Hubs

Through the partnership with **sportscotland** the Active Schools and Community Sports Hubs programmes supports local volunteers and clubs to deliver a diverse range of sporting and physical activity opportunities. There were 277,706 attendances at Active Schools programmes during 2023/24.

HLH's Active Schools Team has been working with the Scottish Football Association (SFA) to offer a girls-only sports programme that uses Disney themes to introduce football skills. The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) 'Disney Playmakers Programme' was piloted in three locations across the Highlands, with a view to rolling this new programme out to other areas in the future. The programme is aimed at young girls, aged 5-8 years, who are not playing football. It invites them to step into the enchanting and vivid world of Disney, as they take the first step on their football journey. These themed sessions create a safe and encouraging environment where imaginations can run wild, as an iconic Disney story is told through movement and play. The idea is that the roleplay element will empower young girls to be healthy and strong, make friends, build confidence, and learn new skills for football and life.

The Tennis Serves project in areas of deprivation, links with ASN units in schools with a focus on delivering women and girls activities and the partnership development with the Home to Highland Care Experienced Education Team are all ways the active schools programme has been developed to be more inclusive over the past year.



Inverness Botanic Gardens is fully committed to

100% recycling

and is a sector leader in terms of carbon reduction and biodiversity

Key Performance Indicators Prìomh Chomharran Coileanaidh

The Finance and Audit Committee is responsible for developing and setting performance indicators for each of the business outcomes, which are reported to the Board.

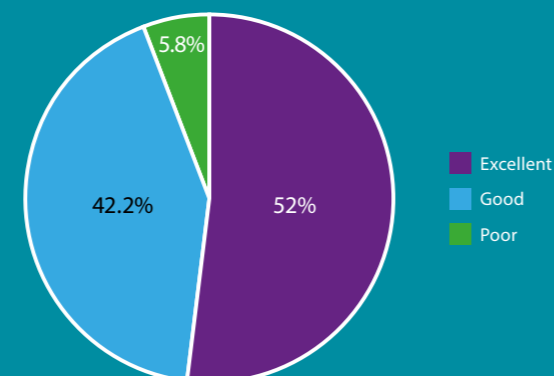
Non-Financial KPI's reported throughout the year:

	2024	2023	2022
Customer Engagements	9,964,521	9,149,527	6,351,536
High Life Subscriptions (monthly average for year)	18,511	17,075	12,451
Average Monthly Staff Turnover	1.24%	0.96%	0.85%
Average Staff Absence Rate	4.4%	5.1%	3.63%
Number of Complaints Received	131	98	69
RIDDOR Accidents/Incidents	0	3	6

In addition, there are 3 non-numeric performance indicators as follows:

- **Delivery of the Service Delivery Contract (SDC) with The Highland Council (THC)** – this is assessed twice per year by THC and the Council’s Education Committee noted that HLH had met or exceeded the requirements set out in the Service Delivery Contract.
- **Health and safety audit** – the annual external health and safety audit found that there were no company wide actions required.

• **Customer surveys**
What is your overall experience of High Life Highland?



Results and Performance Toraidhean agus Coileanadh

The Trustees are satisfied with the level of results achieved during the year and the financial position at year end.

During the year ended 31 March 2024, the charity was able to deliver and develop its services and recorded a deficit of £236,496 (2023 – surplus £23,935,622) after allowing for the actuarial gain posted through the statement of financial activities of £29,000 (2023 – £31,732,000) on the pension fund for the year ended 31 March 2024.

The Trading Company recorded a profit of £506,430 for the year (2023 – £309,770). The Company’s revenue stream is largely tied to the terms of its Service Delivery Contract with The Highland Council. Under the terms of that contract, there is a direct linkage between the level of service required by the Council and the amount of funding provided to the Company to deliver those services.

The Company’s earned income streams performed well during the year with the *highlife* leisure membership income, the largest single source of earned revenue, growing 8.4% during the year. As in previous years, inflationary rises in salaries and operating costs proved challenging, with the nationally negotiated local government pay award resulting in an average uplift of 8.3% for employees of the charity; 4.3% higher than budgeted. Aside from income growth, this was mitigated through vacancy management and reductions in operating costs in addition to £2.4m financial support from The Highland Council.

Moving into the new financial year, discussions on the Service Delivery Contract (SDC) continue and are progressing positively, with an outcome scheduled for Winter 2024. In the meantime, a three year budget arrangement has been agreed with The Highland Council, comprising additional one-off financial support, coupled with saving targets agreed by the charity during the same period.

SDC discussions along with the funding arrangements above are considered by the Board to be the measures required to return the charity to a sustainable financial position.

The Directors consider that, with assurance of support from The Highland Council and adequate reserves, the company has access to sufficient funds to continue as a going concern for the next 12 months.

At the year-end the Company has a surplus on its balance sheet of £1,098,896 (2023 – £1,335,392) including the actuarial adjustment. As explained above, there is a linkage between the level of service required and the funding provided. The future level of contributions to the pension fund has been agreed by the Company and The Highland Council in conjunction with the scheme’s actuaries.

At the year end, the company’s share of the pension fund shows a net asset position of £12,993,000 (2023 - £6,625,000). HLH is not expecting any future benefit from the scheme, and as such, this asset has not been recognised. Whilst welcoming the improvement in the net asset position, Directors and Senior Management recognise that the pension fund valuation can change significantly year on year.

As the sole owner of High Life Highland, The Highland Council has committed to act as guarantor to cover potential pension risks while the Company remains an Admitted Body within its pension scheme.

Risks and Uncertainties Cunnartan agus Mì-chinntean

The Company maintains a comprehensive risk register which is reviewed monthly by Senior Managers and is reported to the Finance and Audit Committee on a quarterly basis with an annual review by the Board. The most significant risk facing The Company at present is lack of investment in facilities in addition to reducing maintenance budgets leading to facility decline, poor customer experience and lack of ability to increase customer numbers.

Statement of Trustees' and Directors' responsibilities

Aithris mu dhleastanasan nan Urrasairean is nan Stiùirichean

The Directors are responsible for preparing the Trustees' and Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulation.

Company law requires the Directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the Directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland". Under company law the Directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the group and of the surplus or deficit of the group for that period.

In preparing those financial statements, the Directors are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the group will continue in business; and
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.

The Directors are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the group's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the group and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the group and the company hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Directors' statement as to disclosure of information to auditors

Aithris nan Stiùirichean a thaobh mar a dh'fhoillsicheadh fiosrachadh dhan luchd-sgrùdaidh

The Directors who are members of the Board at the time of approving the Directors' report are listed on the Company Information page. Having made enquiries of fellow Directors and of the Company's auditors, each of the Directors confirms that:

- to the best of each Director's knowledge and belief, there is no information relevant to the preparation of their report of which the Company's auditors are unaware; and
- each Director has taken all the steps a Director might reasonably be expected to have taken to be aware of relevant audit information and to establish that the Company's auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

Luchd-sgrùdaidh

The auditors, Saffery LLP, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with section 485 of the Companies Act 2006.

In signing this report, the Trustees confirm that they have approved the strategic report in their capacity as Company Directors of High Life Highland Limited.

This report was approved by the Board and signed on its behalf.

Michael Golding
Director

Date:

Financial Statements

Aithrisean Ionmhasail

High Life Highland (A company limited by guarantee)

Independent auditor's report

To the members of High Life Highland

Charity Number: SC042593

Company number: SC407011

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of High Life Highland (the 'parent charitable company') and its subsidiaries (the 'group') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the group statement of financial activities, company statement of financial activities, group balance sheet, company balance sheet and notes to the financial statements, including significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including Financial Reporting Standard 102, the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the affairs of the group and the parent charitable company as at 31 March 2024 and of the group's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and regulations 6 and 8 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended).

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the group and parent charitable company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions related to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the group or the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the annual report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

Our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the course of the audit or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether this gives rise to a material misstatement in the financial statements themselves. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information; we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report which includes the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Annual Report which includes the Directors' Report and the Strategic Report have been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the group and parent charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Trustees' Annual Report and Strategic Report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters in relation to which the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- proper accounting records have not been kept by the parent charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the parent charitable company's financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities set out on page 44, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of the financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the group and the parent charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the group or the parent charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditors under the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 and under the Companies Act 2006 and report in accordance with regulations made under those Acts.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the group and parent financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The specific procedures for this engagement and the extent to which these are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud are detailed below.

Identifying and assessing risks related to irregularities:

We assessed the susceptibility of the group and parent charitable company's financial statements to material misstatement and how fraud might occur, including through discussions with the trustees, discussions within our audit team planning meeting, updating our record of internal controls and ensuring these controls operated as intended. We evaluated possible incentives and opportunities for fraudulent manipulation of the financial statements. We identified laws and regulations that are of significance in the context of the group and parent charitable company by discussions with trustees and updating our understanding of the sector in which the group and parent charitable company operate.

Laws and regulations of direct significance in the context of the group and parent charitable company include The Companies Act 2006, the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006 (as amended) and guidance issued by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator.

Audit response to risks identified:

We considered the extent of compliance with these laws and regulations as part of our audit procedures on the related financial statement items including a review of financial statement disclosures. We reviewed the parent charitable company's records of breaches of laws and regulations, minutes of meetings and correspondence with relevant authorities to identify potential material misstatements arising. We discussed the parent charitable company's policies and procedures for compliance with laws and regulations with members of management responsible for compliance.

During the planning meeting with the audit team, the engagement partner drew attention to the key areas which might involve non-compliance with laws and regulations or fraud. We enquired of management whether they were aware of any instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations or knowledge of any actual, suspected or alleged fraud. We addressed the risk of fraud through management override of controls by testing the appropriateness of journal entries and identifying any significant transactions that were unusual or outside the normal course of business. We assessed whether judgements made in making accounting estimates gave rise to a possible indication of management bias. At the completion stage of the audit, the engagement partner's review included ensuring that the team had approached their work with appropriate professional scepticism and thus the capacity to identify non-compliance with laws and regulations and fraud.

There are inherent limitations in the audit procedures described above and the further removed non-compliance with laws and regulations is from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, the less likely we would become aware of it. Also, the risk of not detecting a material misstatement due to fraud is higher than the risk of not detecting one resulting from error, as fraud may involve deliberate concealment by, for example, forgery or intentional misrepresentations, or through collusion.

A further description of our responsibilities is available on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the parent charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006, and to the parent charitable company's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Charities Accounts (Scotland) Regulations 2006. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the parent charitable company's members and trustees those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the parent charitable company, the parent charitable company's members and trustees as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

.....
Eunice McAdam (Senior Statutory Auditor)
for and on behalf of Saffery LLP

Chartered Accountants
Statutory Auditors

.....
Torridon House
Beechwood Park
Inverness
IV2 3BW

Saffery LLP is eligible to act as an auditor in terms of section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006

High Life Highland (A company limited by guarantee)
Group statement of financial activities (including the income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Charity Number: SC042593
Company number: SC407011

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 total £	2023 total £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	4	2,242,824	-	2,242,824	2,242,824
Charitable activities	5	30,425,064	3,662,403	34,087,467	30,534,901
Other trading activities	6	2,184,774	-	2,184,774	2,130,037
Total income		34,852,662	3,662,403	38,515,065	34,907,762
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds	6	1,678,344	-	1,678,344	1,820,267
Charitable activities	7	33,153,206	3,949,011	37,102,217	40,883,873
Total expenditure		34,831,550	3,949,011	38,780,561	42,704,140
Net income/(expenditure)		21,112	(286,608)	(265,496)	(7,796,378)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains:					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	20	29,000	-	29,000	31,732,000
Net movement in funds		50,112	(286,608)	(236,496)	23,935,622
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		634,905	700,487	1,335,392	(22,600,230)
Total funds carried forward		685,017	413,879	1,098,896	1,335,392

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 56 to 79 form part of these financial statements.

High Life Highland (A company limited by guarantee)
Company statement of financial activities (including the income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2024

Charity Number: SC042593
Company number: SC407011

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 total £	2023 total £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	4	2,748,405	-	2,748,405	2,547,367
Charitable activities	5	30,425,064	3,662,403	34,087,467	30,534,901
Total income		33,173,469	3,662,403	36,835,872	33,082,268
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities	7	33,153,206	3,949,011	37,102,217	40,883,873
Total expenditure		33,153,206	3,949,011	37,102,217	40,883,873
Net income/(expenditure)		20,263	(286,608)	(266,345)	(7,801,605)
Transfers between funds		-	-	-	-
Other recognised gains:					
Actuarial gains on defined benefit pension schemes	20	29,000	-	29,000	31,732,000
Net movement in funds		49,263	(286,608)	(237,345)	23,930,395
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		629,678	700,487	1,330,165	(22,600,230)
Total funds carried forward		678,941	413,879	1,092,820	1,330,165

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 56 to 79 form part of these financial statements.

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		1,189,342		956,155
Current assets					
Stocks	13		117,818		127,201
Debtors	14		1,337,213		1,596,739
Cash at bank and in hand			20,432		22,135
			<u>1,475,463</u>		<u>1,746,075</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15		(1,565,909)		(1,366,838)
Net current (liabilities)/assets			(90,446)		379,237
Net assets excluding pension liability			<u>1,098,896</u>		<u>1,335,392</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	20		-		-
Net assets			<u><u>1,098,896</u></u>		<u><u>1,335,392</u></u>
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	17		685,017		634,905
Restricted funds	18		413,879		700,487
Pension reserve	20		-		-
Total funds			<u><u>1,098,896</u></u>		<u><u>1,335,392</u></u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf by

.....
Michael Golding **Tracy Ligema**
Director Director

Date:

The notes on pages 56 to 79 form part of these financial statements.

	Note	2024		2023	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		1,189,342		956,155
Investments	12		100		100
			<u>1,189,442</u>		<u>956,255</u>
Current assets					
Stocks	13		26,312		34,219
Debtors	14		1,422,543		1,684,394
Cash at bank and in hand			20,432		22,135
			<u>1,469,287</u>		<u>1,740,748</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	15		(1,565,909)		(1,366,838)
Net current (liabilities)/assets			(96,622)		373,910
Net assets excluding pension liability			<u>1,092,820</u>		<u>1,330,165</u>
Defined benefit pension scheme liability	20		-		-
Net assets			<u><u>1,092,820</u></u>		<u><u>1,330,165</u></u>
Funds					
Unrestricted funds	17		678,941		629,678
Restricted funds	18		413,879		700,487
Pension reserve	20		-		-
Total funds			<u><u>1,092,820</u></u>		<u><u>1,330,165</u></u>

The financial statements were approved and authorised for issue by the board and were signed on its behalf by

.....
Michael Golding **Tracy Ligema**
Director Director

Date:

The notes on pages 56 to 79 form part of these financial statements.

Notes to the Financial Statements

Notaichean do na h-Aithrisean Ionmhasail

Terms and
Conditio

High Life Highland (A company limited by guarantee)
Notes to the financial statements (continued)
For the year ended 31 March 2024

Charity Number: SC042593
Company number: SC407011

1 Accounting policies

Company information

High Life Highland is a company limited by guarantee and incorporated in Scotland. The registered office is High Life Highland, Highland Archive Centre, Bught Road, Inverness, IV3 5SS.

1.1 Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The charity meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the group. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £ unless otherwise stated.

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

1.2 Going concern

The charity is dependent upon revenue funding provided by the Highland Council under a contract running to 2036. The level of the management fee is agreed annually. The funding for the year ended 31 March 2025 is agreed. The funding for future years is subject to review. The Highland Council has committed to support the ongoing financial sustainability of High Life Highland, guaranteeing £2.764m of additional financial support for the year ended 31 March 2025. The directors are confident that the level of funding available through the Highland Council under the funding agreement when taken together with other anticipated revenues will be sufficient to enable the charity to continue trading and meet its obligations as they fall due for at least 12 months from the date of signing these financial statements.

1.3 Group financial statements

The consolidated accounts incorporate the accounts of the company and its subsidiary undertaking for the year ended 31 March 2024.

1.4 Incoming resources

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably.

1.4 Incoming resources (continued)

Donation of services is recognised in the accounts at the amount that the charity would pay in the open market for an alternative item that would provide an equivalent benefit to the charity as the donated service.

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria for income recognition are met.

1.5 Resources expended

Expenditure is recognised once there is a legal or constructive obligation to make a payment to a third party, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

- Costs of raising funds comprise the costs of commercial trading activities, including retail and catering facilities at sites operated by High Life Highland.
- Expenditure on charitable activities includes all the costs on activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

Where costs cannot be directly attributed to particular headings they have been allocated to activities on a basis consistent with the use of the resources. Support costs are those costs incurred directly in support of expenditure on the objects of the charity. Management and administration costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

1.6 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose.

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donors or which have been raised by the charity for a particular purpose. The cost of raising and administering such funds are charged against the specific fund. The aim and use of each restricted fund is set out in the notes to the financial statements.

1.7 Employee benefits

The cost of any unused holiday entitlement is recognised in the period in which the employees services are received.

Termination benefits are recognised immediately as an expense when the company is demonstrably committed to terminate the employment of an employee or to provide termination benefits.

Pension costs

The charity participates in The Highland Council Pension Fund, a defined benefit scheme. The assets of the scheme are held separately from those of the charity in an independently administered trust. The fund is valued every three years by a professionally qualified independent actuary and is updated at each balance sheet date with contribution payments made to the plan to ensure that the plan's assets are sufficient to cover future liabilities. Pension plan assets are measured using market values. Pension plan liabilities are measured using the projected unit method and discounted by the yield available on long-dated high quality corporate bonds. The amounts charged to the statement of financial activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities if the benefits have vested. If the costs have not vested immediately, the costs are recognised over the period until vesting occurs. The interest cost and expected return on assets are charged to resources expended. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities.

1.8 Fixed assets

The ownership of the buildings and open spaces managed by the charity is retained by The Highland Council. As part of the transfer process undertaken on 1 October 2011, the contents and equipment within these buildings was sold by The Highland Council to High Life Highland for £1. This amount was expensed in the year ended 31 March 2012.

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less depreciation. Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less estimated residual value of each asset over its expected useful life as follows:

Plant and equipment	10% to 20% per annum straight line basis
Fixtures and fittings	10% to 20% per annum straight line basis

1.9 Investments

Fixed asset investments are stated at cost less provision for diminution in value.

1.10 Stocks

Stocks are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value with proper provision being made for obsolete and slow moving stock. Cost comprises the invoiced price of goods and materials purchased on a first in first out basis.

1.11 Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any discounts due.

1.12 Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any discounts due.

1.13 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value.

1.14 Operating leases

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged in the profit and loss account on a straight line basis over the lease term. Lease incentives are recognised over the lease term on a straight line basis.

1.15 Taxation

Income is stated net of VAT and expenditure includes VAT where this is not recoverable.

The group's financial statements include the relevant corporation tax in respect of the subsidiary undertaking.

1.16 Cash flow statement

The financial results of the charity are consolidated into those of The Highland Council and consequently the company has taken advantage of the exemption available under FRS 102 from preparing a cash flow statement under the requirements of section 7 - Statement of Cash Flows and section 3 - Financial Statement Presentation paragraph 3.17d.

2 Legal status of the charity

The charity is a company limited by guarantee and has no share capital. The liability of each member in the event of winding-up is limited to £1.

3 Critical accounting judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty

In the application of the charity's accounting policies, the directors are required to make judgements, estimates and assumptions about the carrying amount of assets and liabilities that are not readily apparent from other sources. The estimates and associated assumptions are based on historical experience and other factors that are considered to be relevant. Actual results may differ from these estimates.

The estimates and underlying assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis. Revisions to accounting estimates are recognised in the period in which the estimate is revised where the revision affects only that period, or in the period of the revision and future periods where the revision affects both current and future periods.

Critical judgements

The judgement surrounding the ability of the group and parent charitable company to continue as a going concern is discussed in note 1.2.

Key sources of estimation uncertainty

The estimates and assumptions which have a significant risk of causing a material adjustment to the carrying amount of assets and liabilities are as follows:

Pension

The charity participates in The Highland Council Pension Fund, a defined benefit scheme. The amounts charged to the statement of financial activities in respect of the defined benefit scheme are the current service costs and gains and losses on settlements and curtailments. Past service costs are recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities if the benefits have vested. If the benefits have not vested immediately, the costs are recognised over the period until vesting occurs. The interest cost and expected return on assets are charged to resources expended. Actuarial gains and losses are recognised immediately in the statement of financial activities.

4 Income from donations and legacies (group and company)

	2024		2023	
	Group £	Charity £	Group £	Charity £
Gift aid donation from subsidiary	-	505,581	-	304,543
Donation of services - overheads	2,242,824	2,242,824	2,242,824	2,242,824
	<u>2,242,824</u>	<u>2,748,405</u>	<u>2,242,824</u>	<u>2,547,367</u>

All income from donations and legacies in the current and prior year was unrestricted.

5 Income from charitable activities (group)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 total £	2023 total £
	Management fee - The Highland Council	18,619,671	354,888	18,974,559
Other grants	293,960	3,047,261	3,341,221	2,790,393
Delivery of service delivery contract	11,511,433	260,254	11,771,687	10,566,226
	<u>30,425,064</u>	<u>3,662,403</u>	<u>34,087,467</u>	<u>30,534,901</u>

Income from charitable activities was £34,087,467 (2023 - £30,534,901) of which £30,425,064 (2023 - £27,441,014) was unrestricted and £3,662,403 (2023 - £3,093,887) was restricted.

5 Income from charitable activities (company)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 total £	2023 total £
	Management fee - The Highland Council	18,619,671	354,888	18,974,559
Other grants	293,960	3,047,261	3,341,221	2,790,393
Delivery of service delivery contract	11,511,433	260,254	11,771,687	10,566,226
	<u>30,425,064</u>	<u>3,662,403</u>	<u>34,087,467</u>	<u>30,534,901</u>

Income from charitable activities was £34,087,467 (2023 - £30,534,901) of which £30,425,064 (2023 -

6 Income from other trading activities (group)

The wholly owned subsidiary, High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C., is a company registered in Scotland (registration number SC408067) which provides retail and catering facilities at sites operated by High Life Highland.

A summary of the trading results is shown below:

	High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C.	
	2024 £	2023 £
Turnover	2,184,774	2,130,037
Cost of sales and administrative expenses	(1,678,344)	(1,820,267)
Other income	-	-
Profit before taxation	<u>506,430</u>	<u>309,770</u>
Taxation	-	-
Net (loss)/profit for the year	<u>506,430</u>	<u>309,770</u>

Distributions paid to the parent charity under the gift aid scheme were £505,581 (2023 - £304,543). Expenditure on raising funds included in the group statement of financial activities on page 23 includes cost of sales, administrative expenses and taxation amounting to £1,678,344 (2023 - £1,820,267).

	High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C.	
	2024 £	2023 £
The assets and liabilities of the subsidiary were:		
Current assets	91,506	92,982
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(85,330)	(87,655)
Net assets	<u>6,176</u>	<u>5,327</u>
Capital and reserves	<u>6,176</u>	<u>5,327</u>

7 Expenditure on charitable activities (group and company)

	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	2024 total £	2023 total £
Wages and salaries	23,066,762	2,643,589	25,710,351	24,247,018
Property costs	732,632	11,756	744,388	796,141
Travel and transport	-	-	-	365,065
Supplies and services	5,207,490	548,560	5,756,050	5,319,164
Third party payments	265,978	389,873	655,851	360,774
Depreciation	296,723	139,550	436,273	315,559
Expected return on pension scheme assets	(3,228,000)	-	(3,228,000)	(1,814,000)
Interest on pension scheme liabilities	2,921,000	-	2,921,000	2,593,000
Pension scheme service cost	3,864,317	215,683	4,080,000	8,676,000
Audit and accountancy fees	25,000	-	25,000	24,450
Directors' expenses reimbursed	1,304	-	1,304	702
	<u>33,153,206</u>	<u>3,949,011</u>	<u>37,102,217</u>	<u>40,883,873</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities was £37,102,217 (2023 - £40,883,873) of which £33,153,206 (2023 - £37,803,096) was unrestricted and £3,949,011 (2023 - £3,080,777) was restricted.

8 Net income/(expenditure) for the year

	2024 £	2023 £
This is stated after charging:		
Fees payable to the group's auditor:		
Audit of High Life Highland	19,150	18,400
Audit of High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C.	2,350	2,200
Preparation of financial statements	2,350	2,200
Tax compliance	1,750	1,650
Operating lease rentals	-	20,857
Depreciation	<u>436,273</u>	<u>315,559</u>

9 Trustee remuneration

The trustees are not entitled to any emoluments during the year. Travel expenses totalling £1,304 (2023 - £702) were reimbursed to 3 trustees during the year (2023 - 3).

10 Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

	2024 £	2023 £
Wages and salaries	23,637,730	22,504,964
Social security costs	1,947,163	1,751,059
Pension costs	3,734,463	3,539,713
	<u>29,319,356</u>	<u>27,795,736</u>

In 2023/24 the employer's contribution rate was 19% of pensionable pay.

The average weekly number of employees during the year was as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
Management	5	5
Support services	27	30
Operations	1,290	1,257
	<u>1,322</u>	<u>1,292</u>

10 Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel (continued)

The number of employees remunerated at a rate of over £60,000 per annum was as follows:

	2024 Number	2023 Number
£60,001 - £70,000	2	5
£70,001 - £80,000	1	3
£80,001 - £90,000	4	1
£90,001 - £100,000	-	1
£100,001 - £110,000	1	-

Key management personnel

The key management personnel of the group comprise the trustees, the Chief Executive, the Director of Sport and Leisure, the Director of Corporate Services, the Director of Inverness Castle and the Director of Culture and Learning. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the group was £445,942 (2023 - £409,683).

Redundancies and terminations

The total amount charged for the year in relation to redundancies and terminations was £41,981 (2023 - £32,640). All amounts were fully paid in the year and therefore there are no liabilities at the balance sheet date.

11 Tangible fixed assets (group and company)

	Plant and equipment £	Fixtures and fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At 1 April 2023	2,444,846	10,431	2,455,277
Additions	675,810	-	675,810
Disposals	(31,751)	-	(31,751)
At 31 March 2024	<u>3,088,905</u>	<u>10,431</u>	<u>3,099,336</u>
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2023	1,488,691	10,431	1,499,122
Charge for the year	436,273	-	436,273
On disposals	(25,401)	-	(25,401)
At 31 March 2024	<u>1,899,563</u>	<u>10,431</u>	<u>1,909,994</u>
Net book value			
At 31 March 2024	<u>1,189,342</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,189,342</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>956,155</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>956,155</u>

12 Fixed asset investments

Cost and net book value

At 1 April 2023 and at 31 March 2024

Shares in
subsidiary
£

100

The company holds 100% of the ordinary share capital of High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C., a company incorporated in Scotland. The activities and results of this company are summarised in note 6.

13 Stocks

	2024		2023	
	Group £	Charity £	Group £	Charity £
Goods for resale	117,818	26,312	127,201	34,219
	<u>117,818</u>	<u>26,312</u>	<u>127,201</u>	<u>34,219</u>

14 Debtors

	2024		2023	
	Group £	Charity £	Group £	Charity £
Trade debtors	268,335	268,335	256,699	256,699
Prepayments and accrued income	459,786	459,786	274,685	274,685
Corporation tax recoverable	-	-	-	-
Amounts owed by group undertakings	609,092	694,422	1,065,355	1,153,010
	<u>1,337,213</u>	<u>1,422,543</u>	<u>1,596,739</u>	<u>1,684,394</u>

The charity does not operate a bank account. All receipts and payments are made by The Highland Council on behalf of the charity and its subsidiary. High Life Highland has complete control over cash management in that all receipts and payments are accounted for and authorised independently of The Highland Council. High Life Highland is set up as a separate charity in the council's financial system with a separately identifiable intercompany account in the ledger which records all cash transactions. At each year end, a reconciliation is completed and High Life Highland receives interest on the average cash balance held throughout the year. Therefore at any point in time High Life Highland's cash balances can be separately identified from the council through the intercompany account, with all transactions controlled and authorised by High Life Highland management and reported to the trustees.

14 Debtors (continued)

Included in amounts owed by group undertakings is £609,092 (2023 - £1,065,355) due from The Highland Council, which represents income received on behalf of High Life Highland.

15 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024		2023	
	Group	Charity	Group	Charity
	£	£	£	£
Trade creditors	22,057	22,057	140,815	140,815
Other creditors and accruals	1,543,852	1,543,852	1,226,023	1,226,023
Amounts owed to group undertakings	-	-	-	-
	<u>1,565,909</u>	<u>1,565,909</u>	<u>1,366,838</u>	<u>1,366,838</u>

Deferred income

	2024	
	Group	Charity
	£	£
At 1 April 2023	30,243	30,243
Amount deferred in year	-	-
Amount released to income	(9,316)	(9,316)
At 31 March 2024	<u>20,927</u>	<u>20,927</u>

Deferred income is included within other creditors and accruals and represents grant income for which performance conditions had not been met at the year end and sales invoices raised in advance.

16 Analysis of net liabilities between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total
	£	£	£
Group			
Fixed assets	1,189,342	-	1,189,342
Current assets	1,061,584	413,879	1,475,463
Current liabilities	(1,565,909)	-	(1,565,909)
Pension liability	-	-	-
	<u>685,017</u>	<u>413,879</u>	<u>1,098,896</u>
Charity			
Fixed assets	1,189,442	-	1,189,442
Current assets	1,055,408	413,879	1,469,287
Current liabilities	(1,565,909)	-	(1,565,909)
Pension liability	-	-	-
	<u>678,941</u>	<u>413,879</u>	<u>1,092,820</u>

17 Unrestricted funds

	At 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Actuarial (loss)/gain	Transfers	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Group						
General fund	634,905	34,852,662	(34,802,550)	-	-	685,017
Pension reserve	-	-	(29,000)	29,000	-	-
	<u>634,905</u>	<u>34,852,662</u>	<u>(34,831,550)</u>	<u>29,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>685,017</u>
Company						
General fund	629,678	33,173,469	(33,124,206)	-	-	678,941
Pension reserve	-	-	(29,000)	29,000	-	-
	<u>629,678</u>	<u>33,173,469</u>	<u>(33,153,206)</u>	<u>29,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>678,941</u>

17 Unrestricted funds (continued)

Designated funds

Of the £784,999 of reserves transferred across as part of the charity combination with Inverness Leisure in 2016, the remaining £139,715 has been designated for capital works at Inverness Leisure. In addition, the Board approved at its meeting of 14th March 2023 the designation of £300,000 of unrestricted reserves to fund the cost of two years backpay relating to the retrospective remodelling of the charity's pay structure. These £439,715 of designated funds are included as part of the general fund.

18 Restricted funds (group and company)

	At 1 April 2023	Incoming resources	Outgoing resources	Transfers	At 31 March 2024
	£	£	£	£	£
Coaching	32,793	-	-	-	32,793
Activity Agreements	31,500	-	(31,500)	-	-
Active Schools	36,928	1,096,043	(1,114,589)	-	18,382
Adult Education	39,252	-	(39,252)	-	-
Canal Parks	30,000	6,000	-	-	36,000
Youth Work	50,746	473,307	(618,141)	-	(94,088)
Highland Cares	8,955	-	-	-	8,955
Adult Learning - Highland	39,231	87,196	(126,427)	-	-
Scottish Library &	11,264	7,450	(9,869)	-	8,845
Esmee Fairburn Collection	15,126	-	(460)	-	14,666
Townscape Heritage	11,890	-	-	-	11,890
MacMillan Move More	31,091	-	(15,087)	-	16,004
Well Now	23,902	-	(23,902)	-	-
Live It Highland	(1,119)	47,926	(40,092)	-	6,715
Creative Learning Network	2,981	-	(2,981)	-	-
Diabetes Online Support	6,272	-	(6,272)	-	-
Visual Arts and Crafts	(6,476)	15,750	(19,369)	-	(10,095)
Cardiac Rehab	43,762	-	(43,762)	-	-
Grow Project	107,785	140,361	(191,792)	-	56,354
Fingal Centre Gym	(311)	311	-	-	-
Life Changes Trust	11,019	-	-	-	11,019
Cycle Friendly	11,524	-	(3,073)	-	8,451
Wick Academy	15,992	-	(2,459)	-	13,533
Highland Pictish Trail	(1)	1	-	-	-
Healthy Island Funding	10,673	-	(2,159)	-	8,514
Parkinsons Exercise	3,256	-	(3,256)	-	-
Green Health Events	3,634	-	(3,634)	-	-

18 Restricted funds (group and company) (continued)

Nevis Outdoor Classroom	15,347	-	-	-	15,347
IL - Strength &	12,878	-	(8,175)	-	4,703
Nairn Pitches & Playing	7,631	-	-	-	7,631
North Coast Visitor	61,704	150,000	(136,704)	-	75,000
Nairn Gym Equipment	42,457	-	(14,153)	-	28,304
Public Library COVID	7,117	-	(7,117)	-	-
Spirit Journeys	(32,656)	523,033	(463,652)	-	26,725
Spirit 360	56,952	-	(2,500)	-	54,452
Health & Wellbeing	-	26,000	(26,000)	-	-
Inverness Common Good	11,418	-	-	-	11,418
Folk Museum Windows	(4,615)	4,615	(361)	-	(361)
Hot Food at Hilton	915	-	(915)	-	-
Health, Wealth &	2,017	-	-	-	2,017
Mental Health and	8,457	-	(8,457)	-	-
Milton Holiday Club	-	23,000	(23,000)	-	-
Inverness Castle	-	288,638	(314,307)	-	(25,669)
Active Health	(6,843)	51,258	-	-	44,415
Erasmus	(1,000)	1,000	-	-	-
A Season of Stories	4,214	-	-	-	4,214
Youth Music Initiative	(139,357)	479,258	(494,354)	-	(154,453)
Highland Young	6,803	4,292	(2,977)	-	8,118
Highland Cares	15,580	14,113	(18,408)	-	11,285
Planet Youth Project	49,800	-	(21,487)	-	28,313
Community Cycling Fund	9,999	-	-	-	9,999
Island Heritage and	-	63,365	(38,699)	-	24,666
Archives	-	8,225	(5,111)	-	3,114
Developers contributions	-	56,345	(56,345)	-	-
Culloden Library	-	4,300	(4,300)	-	-
Inverness Bike Racks	-	55,425	-	-	55,425
North Coast Visitor	-	11,229	-	-	11,229
Folk Museum Curling	-	6,000	-	-	6,000
Nature Restoration Fund	-	5,816	(1,776)	-	4,040
Tomatin Sports	-	2,444	(2,137)	-	307
Millburn Academy	-	9,702	-	-	9,702
	700,487	3,662,403	(3,949,011)	-	413,879

The charity receives funding from a variety of sources for different purposes, all within the overall objectives of the company. The purposes of the above restricted funds are as follows:

- Coaching - To provide support for voluntary sports coaches.
- Activity Agreements - To provide young adults aged between 16 and 19 years old with the necessary skills to prepare them for employment.

18 Restricted funds (group and company) (continued)

- Active Schools - Funding received from Sport Scotland to develop, promote and encourage sport in the Highlands.
- Adult Education - Funding received from the European Social Fund in support of the provision of language and support services for inwards migrants to the Highlands.
- Canal Parks - Sinking fund to replace pitch.
- Youth Work - Funding received to provide targeted youth work and services in specific areas of the Highlands.
- Highland Cares - Funding to promote swimming and fitness for teenagers in Wester Ross.
- Scottish Library & Information Council - Funding to provide video consulting services in libraries and promote youth fitness through music and dance.
- Youth Music Initiative - Funding received from Creative Scotland to provide access to high quality music making opportunities for young people and support the development of the youth music sector.
- Esmee Fairburn Collection - Funding received to increase access to the Highland decorative arts collection.
- Townscape Heritage - Funding received to create a digital heritage trail in Inverness.
- MacMillan Move More - Funding received from MacMillan Cancer Support to ensure that people living with cancer are supported to become physically active, both before, during and after their treatment.
- Well Now - Funding received to deliver weight management courses.
- Live It Highland - Funding from NHS Highland to support people with pre diabetes or diabetes through exercise.
- Creative Learning Network - Funding provided by Education Scotland to support Creative Learning Networks, implement Scotland's Creative Learning Plan and champion creativity, the arts and culture in schools and communities.
- Diabetes Online Support -Funding received from NHS Highland to help support people with Type 2 diabetes access online services.
- Visual Arts and Crafts - Funding provided by Creative Scotland to support individuals to develop their creative practice in Visual arts and Crafts and support the cultural infrastructure of the local area.
- Cardiac Rehab - Funding provided by NHS Highland to provide exercise classes for people recovering from cardiac health issues.
- Grow Project - Funding provided by The David Sutherland Trust to provide opportunities for practical horticulture for adults with a learning disability in Inverness.
- Fingal Centre Gym Equipment - Funding provided by The Highland Council Developers, contributions for the purchase of fitness equipment for the Fingal Centre in Portree
- Life Changes Trust - Funding provided by the Life Changes Trust to support people with dementia.
- Cycle Friendly Development Fund - Funding provided by Cycle Scotland to promote cycling as a healthy, sustainable and accessible way to travel to work.
- Parkinsons Exercise Classes - Funding from NHS Highland to provide exercise classes for people with Parkinson's Disease.
- Erasmus - Funding provided by the European Union to promote transnational learning across European museums

18 Restricted funds (group and company) (continued)

- Inverness Leisure Strength & Conditioning - Funding provided by sportscotland to create a new strength and conditioning gym at Inverness Leisure
- Nevis Outdoor Classroom - Funding provided by the Nevis Trust and Nevis Landscape Partnership to promote outdoor learning for children.
- Nairn Pitches & Playing Fields - Funding provided by the Nairn Fields & Pitches Management Committee for the improvement of playing fields in Nairn.
- North Coast Visitor Centre - Funding provided by Magnox Ltd and The Highland Council to operate a visitor centre and museum in Thurso.
- Hot Food at Hilton - Funding from The Highland Council to provide free hot lunches at Hilton Community Centre in Inverness.
- Green Health Events - Funding provided by Highland LEADER and Scottish National Heritage to deliver a series of events and activities to help improve and sustain the health and wellbeing of participants through improved access and use of outdoor spaces.
- Adult Learning - Highland Third Sector Interface - Funding Provided by Highland Third Sector Interface to support Adult Learning and wellbeing of refugees in the Highland area.
- Wick Academy Development Fund - Funding received from French Duncan to purchase sports equipment for East Caithness Community Campus
- Healthy Island Funding - Funding received from Inspire Scotland to run a programme of activities that to promote the health and wellbeing of the Isle of Skye
- Nairn Gym Equipment - Insurance income from The Highland Council to replace damaged gym equipment at Nairn Leisure Centre.
- Public Library COVID Relief Fund - Funding Provided by The Scottish Government to support public libraries across the Highlands following the pandemic.
- Spirit Journeys - Funding from the Natural Culture and Heritage Fund to promote the culture and heritage of The Highlands
- Spirit 360 - Funding from Creative Scotland to create new art works inspired by local stories that reflect the theme 'Spirit of the Highlands'.
- Health & Wellbeing Manager - Contribution received from NHS Highland towards the post of Health & Wellbeing Manager
- Inverness Common Good Events - Funding from the Inverness Common Good Fund to host events including The Highland Games, Bonfire Night and Halloween.
- Folk Museum Windows - Funding provided by Museums Galleries Scotland to replace windows in historic buildings at Highland Folk Museum
- Active Health Programmes - Funding from NHS Highland to develop active health programmes and activities to support people with a range of health conditions.
- Health, Wealth & Happiness - Funding provided by Museums Galleries Scotland to create and exhibition exploring healthcare in The Highlands
- Youth Music Initiative - Funding received from Creative Scotland to provide access to high quality music making opportunities for young people and support the development of the youth music sector
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund - Funding provided by Highland Third Sector Interface to promote mental health and wellbeing through experiences in nature.
- Milton Holiday Club - Funding received from The Highland Council to run a holiday club for children in Milton, Easter Ross
- Inverness Castle Development - Funding from the Highland Council for the management of Inverness Castle development project.

18 Restricted funds (group and company) (continued)

- A Season of Stories - Funding from Museum Galleries Scotland to promote storytelling at the Highland Folk Museum.
- Highland Young Musicians - Funding raised through sponsorship and parental contributions to foster excellence and inclusivity through various supported music activities in the Highlands.
- Highland Cares - Funding provided to run outdoor activity classes in Skye & Lochalsh and Wester Ross including kayaking, archery and caving.
- Planet Youth Project - Funding provided by The Highland Drug & Alcohol Partnership to support at risk youths through sport in Sutherland and Caithness.
- Community Cycling Fund - Funding received from sportscotland to promote cycling and deliver greater equality and inclusion within schools.
- Island Heritage and Culture Officer - Funding Provided by the Scottish Government to promote the heritgsge and culture of the Inner Hebrides.
- Archives - Funding Provided by The Highland Council, Highland Cares and Stagecoach to support the Archives Service in the Highlands.
-
- Developers Contributions - Funding provided via The Highland Council to purchase gym equipment.
- Culloden Library - Funding provided by The Highland Council to create a community learning café at Culloden Library.
- Inverness Bike Racks - Funding provided by The Highland Council to install bike racks at Northern Meeting Park, Bught Park and Inverness Castle.
- North Coast Visitor Centre Upgrades - Funding provided by Museums Galleries Scotland to soundproof the Caithness Room at North Coast Visitor Centre.
- Folk Museum Curling Pond - Funding provided by the Cairngorms Trust to reinstate the curling pond at Highland Folk Museum as a freshwater habitat.
- Nature Restoration Fund - Funding provided by The Highland Council for the creation of wildlife ponds at Highland Folk Museum.
- Tomatin Sports - Funding provided by Strathdearn Community Developments to promote sport in Tomatin.
- Millburn Academy Football - Funding Provide by The Highland Council to promote football development at Millburn Academy.

19 Controlling interest

The company is under the ultimate control of the Highland Council (having regard to the Council's powers as sole member) but without prejudice to the directors' duties under company law and charity law to exercise independent judgement and to further what they consider to be the best interests of the company.

The largest group and the smallest group for which consolidated financial statements are prepared which include High Life Highland is that of The Highland Council. Copies of these financial statements can be obtained from www.highland.gov.uk.

20 Pension commitments

The charity is an admitted body of The Highland Council Pension Fund which provides pension benefits under the Local Government Pension Scheme to employees of High Life Highland. Contributions are made to this scheme, on the advice of an independent qualified actuary, to ensure that the plan's assets are sufficient to cover future liabilities. The assets of the scheme are held separately from the charity in an independently administered fund. Contributions are recognised in the statement of financial activities in the period in which they become payable.

The valuation used for the FRS 102 disclosures has been based on rolling forward the value of the employer's liabilities from a starting position of zero at 1 October 2011, allowing for the different financial assumptions required under FRS 102. The valuation used has been based on the most recent actuarial valuation at 31 March 2023, and was updated by the actuary to assess the liabilities of the schemes at 31 March 2024. The assumptions that have the most significant effect on the results of the valuation are those relating to price increases, the rate of increases in salaries and pensions and the discount rate. Scheme assets are stated at their bid value at the balance sheet dates.

With effect from 1 April 2015, a schedule of contributions was put in place to fund the scheme's defined benefits at the current rate of 17.5% p.a. of total payroll.

20 Pension commitments (continued)

The assets and liabilities of the schemes are:

	2024 £000's	2023 £000's
Fair value of scheme assets	77,672	66,032
Present value of scheme liabilities	(64,664)	(59,392)
Present value of unfunded liabilities	(15)	(15)
Unrecognised asset	(12,993)	(6,625)
Liability in the scheme	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

The major categories of scheme assets as a percentage of total scheme assets are:

	2024	2023
Equities	69%	69%
Bonds	10%	11%
Property	15%	15%
Cash	6%	5%

The amounts recognised in the statement of financial activities are analysed as follows:

	2024 £000's	2023 £000's
Recognised in the statement of financial activities:		
Current service cost	(4,054)	(8,676)
Past service cost	(26)	-
Interest on obligation	(2,921)	(2,593)
Expected return on scheme assets	3,228	1,814
	<u>(3,773)</u>	<u>(9,455)</u>

20 Pension commitments (continued)

The principal assumptions at the opening and closing balance sheet date were:

	2024	2023
Rate of salary increases (over life of the scheme)	3.55%	3.75%
Rate of increases in pensions in payment	2.75%	2.95%
Discount rate	4.85%	4.75%
Post retirement mortality:	2024	2023
Current pensions at 65 (male)	20.7 yrs	20.4 yrs
Current pensions at 65 (female)	23.7 yrs	23.1 yrs
Future pensions at 65 (male)	21.4 yrs	21.6 yrs
Future pensions at 65 (female)	25.2 yrs	25 yrs

The mortality tables adopted were based on the Fund's VitaCurves with improvements in line with the CMI 2021 model, with a 10% weighting of 2021 (and 2020) data, standard smoothing (Sk7), initial adjustment of 0.25% and a long term rate of improvement of 1.5% p.a. for both males and females. 'Current' disclosures relate to assumptions based on longevity following retirement at the balance sheet date, with 'future' being that relating to an employee retiring in 20 years time. These assumptions will be reconsidered when the next triennial review of The Highland Council Pension Scheme is undertaken.

Change in assumptions at 31 March 2024:

	Approximate % increase to defined benefit obligation	Approximate monetary amount £000's
0.1% decrease in real discount rate	2%	1,550
1 year increase in member life expectancy	4%	2,587
0.1% increase in salary increase rate	0%	71
0.1% increase in pension increase rate	2%	1,507

20 Pension commitments (continued)

Changes in the present value of the defined benefit obligations are analysed as follows:

	2024 £000's	2023 £000's
Opening defined benefit obligations	59,407	89,849
Current service cost	4,054	8,676
Past service cost	26	-
Interest cost	2,921	2,593
Actuarial loss/(gain)	(1,610)	(42,109)
Benefits paid	(1,286)	(698)
Contributions by scheme participants	1,168	1,097
Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(1)	(1)
	<u>64,679</u>	<u>59,407</u>

Changes in the fair value of the plan assets are analysed as follows:

	2024 £000's	2023 £000's
Opening fair value of scheme assets	66,032	64,086
Expected return on scheme assets	3,228	1,814
Employer contributions	3,743	3,485
Contributions in respect of unfunded benefits	1	1
Contributions by scheme members	1,168	1,097
Benefits paid	(1,286)	(698)
Actuarial gain/(loss)	4,787	(3,752)
Estimated unfunded benefits paid	(1)	(1)
	<u>77,672</u>	<u>66,032</u>

The amount of actuarial gains and losses recognised in the statement of financial activities was an actuarial gain of £29,000 (2023 - £31,732,000).

The best estimate of contributions to be paid by the group to the scheme for the year beginning after 31 March 2024 is £3,427,000.

20 Pension commitments (continued)

Amounts for the closing and opening balance sheet are as follows:

	2024 £000's	2023 £000's	2022 £000's	2021 £000's
Fair value of scheme assets	77,672	66,032	64,086	58,288
Present value of defined benefit obligation	(64,679)	(59,407)	(89,849)	(87,438)
Unrecognised asset	(12,993)	(6,625)	-	-
Net liability in scheme	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(25,763)</u>	<u>(29,150)</u>

The Highland Council acts as guarantor as long as High Life Highland remains an admitted body within the Council's pension scheme.

21 Obligations under operating leases (group and company)

Future minimum rentals under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Within one year	-	-
In two to five years	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>



High Life Highland
Highland Archive Centre
Bught Road
Inverness
IV3 5SS

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

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1. Purpose of Review
2. Background to High Life Highland
3. Financial Year 2024/25
4. Financial Year 2025/26
5. Other matters
6. Conclusions

1. Purpose of Review

The Directors make a rigorous assessment of whether the company is a going concern when preparing the annual financial statements. In doing so, the Directors consider all available information about the future when concluding whether the Company is a going concern at the date the accounts will be approved.

The review period is twelve months from the date of approval of the financial statements.

2. Background to High Life Highland

High Life Highland is a charitable company limited by guarantee, registered in Scotland. Its registered office address is Highland Archive Centre, Bught Road, Inverness, IV3 5SS (Company number SC407011, Charity number SC042593). It is a subsidiary of The Highland Council, by virtue of it being the sole member of the company and having the power to appoint its directors. The company was formed on 8 September 2011 to deliver a range of community learning and leisure services on behalf of The Highland Council and was registered as a charity on 15 September 2011.

High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C. has been established as its trading company and takes the form of a community interest company limited by shares with the whole share capital being held by the main charitable company. The principal aim is to generate funds which will be utilised by the charity in pursuit of its charitable objectives. All profits are donated back to the Charity as gift aid.

The principal activities of the company are to develop and promote opportunities in culture, learning, sport, leisure and health and well-being.

The Company operates an annual budget of £35.7M which includes a management fee from the Highland Council of £16.6m plus one-off additional financial support of £2.8m in 2024/25 to deliver services in line with a 25-year Service Delivery Contract. The balance of the Income is made of:

- Grant funding to deliver specific projects mainly in Sports, Health & Well-being and Youth work - The directors have considered the impact of reduced funding on the organization and have a strategy in place to deal with this.

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

- High Life Membership & Admissions – Leisure Facilities
- Trading Income, mainly from Facilities & Museums reported through the C.I.C.
- Activity driven Income, Leisure facilities, Outdoor activities, Sports

The Turnover of the company has grown from £19.4M at the date of transfer to £35.7M for the current year’s budget over the 12 areas of work, with HLH employing 1,322 Staff.

The Company’s financial position is of prime focus for Directors and Senior Management in minimising, as far as possible, the impact on services of the current budgetary pressures whilst ensuring the financial viability of the organization.

Detailed performance/risk monitoring is carried out throughout the year by Senior Management, F&A Committee and Board including:

- Detailed Financial Monitoring with monthly reports prepared and presented at the Senior Management Team meetings which are reviewed quarterly by the Finance and Audit Committee [F&A] and reported to the Board.
- Detailed Risk Analysis with the risk register reviewed monthly by Senior Managers and quarterly by F&A, annually by the Board
- Half yearly performance review by THC against key deliverables under the Service Delivery Contract.

All of which can be evidenced by Committee/ Board minutes.

3. Financial Year 2024/25

The Budget, including High Life Highland Trading CIC, was approved by the Board at its March 2024 meeting for financial year 2024/25 is summarised below with further detail provided in **Appendix A**:

Category	Budget
Income	
Highlife Income	7,986,704
Other Income	5,895,869
Services Fee	16,646,339
Additional THC Support	2,764,000
Grant Income	2,418,188
Total Income	35,711,100

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Expenditure	
Staff Costs	(29,726,715)
Other Costs	(5,984,385)
Total Expenditure	(35,711,100)

Surplus/(Deficit)	0
--------------------------	----------

The budget for the year was set based on income growth, increased prices and an anticipated pay award of 3% with employers pension contribution reducing from 19% to 17.5%.

Following a change to the funding formula, the cost of the nationally negotiated local government pay award will be funded by The Highland Council resulting in a £573k uplift in the Service Fee. In addition, The Highland Council has provided assurance of £2.764m (**Appendix B**) in financial support which has been included within the annual budget.

At 31st March HLH had an unrestricted fund balance of £245,302

At the end of Q1 the draft outturn for the year to 31 March 2025 was a small projected surplus of £18k (**Appendix C**) with pressures in Other Costs due to the 40% increase in the insurance premium mitigated by staff savings generated through vacancies. Income is largely on target with revenue from the highlife leisure membership scheme, the single largest source of income, having achieved budget at the end of Q1.

With the pay award now being funded by The Highland Council, the largest financial pressure and single most significant risk to the charity’s sustainability post-pandemic has now been mitigated. Should the pay award settlement be higher than budgeted (3%), The Highland Council will provide the requisite additional funding through the Service Fee.

Whilst Q1 income figures are on target, the budget is based on growth throughout the year with the risk that targets will not be achieved. Budgets will be closely monitored throughout the year and mitigating actions taken should this be the case.

Having required £578k less than the £3m budgeted additional financial support from The Highland Council in financial year 2023/24, Directors and Senior Management are confident in their ability to achieve further savings.

5. Financial Year 2025/26

Per the Letter of Comfort attached in **Appendix B**, the level of additional financial support provided by The Highland Council will reduce from £2.764m in 2024/25 to £894k in 2025/26.

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

The Senior Management of HLH has begun preparing the 2025/26 revenue budget and, with the pay award pressure removed, is confident of achieving the required £1.87m saving through the standard combination of income growth, efficiencies and reductions.

The savings target is of similar value achieved in previous years as detailed in the table below:

Financial Year	Income (£)	Efficiencies (£)	Reductions (£)	Total (£)
22/23	325,667	46,000	903,924	1,275,591
23/24	921,753	711,001	153,925	1,786,679
24/25	1,125,330	475,829	0	1,601,159
Total	2,372,750	1,232,830	1,057,849	4,663,429

6. Other matters

HLH is an ALEO of the Highland Council and has chosen to operate all its banking transactions through the Highland Council bank account as that is positive for cash flow and provides assurance to the Directors.

HLH has complete control over cash management in that all payments and receipts are accounted for and recognised independently of the Highland Council. HLH is set up as a separate Company (Company 30) in the financial system with a separately identifiable intercompany account in the ledger which records all cash transactions. At any point in time HLH’s cash balances can be separately identified from the Council through the intercompany account with all transactions controlled and recognised by HLH management and reported to the Trustees.

The Directors have considered the impact of the annual Pension adjustment on reserves. This adjustment can result in substantial changes to the fund valuation based on actuarial estimates and calculations. With assurance from The Highland Council of access to funding, the company continues to be able to meet its -liabilities as they fall due irrespective of the FRS 102 accounting adjustments and the directors are therefore of the opinion that the company is a going concern.

7. Conclusion

In summary, the Directors are satisfied that, with assurance from the Highland Council in year support and a commitment to support HLH in ensuring its ongoing financial sustainability, the company has sufficient access to working capital and funds to enable it to continue in operational existence for at least the next 12 months.

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Highlife Highland plays a vital role in communities throughout the Highlands providing services essential to the wellbeing of its inhabitants as well meeting Public Service Obligations on behalf of The Highland Council.

The directors consider that, having due regard to the terms of the Service Delivery Contract and the work currently being undertaken of its review, the company has access to sufficient funds to deliver the level of service required.

The Directors conclude that there are no material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt about the company’s ability to continue as a going concern; and the disclosures in note 1 to the financial statements are sufficient to explain these facts.

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Annual Budget (2024/25)

APPENDIX A

	Income	Other Costs	Staff Costs	Total (£)
Adult	20,582	(48,301)	(708,199)	(735,918)
Archives	294,206	(42,722)	(1,027,827)	(776,343)
Facilities	12,501,448	(2,922,722)	(13,279,591)	(3,700,865)
Libraries	49,559	(542,528)	(3,338,005)	(3,830,974)
Management	467,387	(1,119,200)	(2,407,013)	(3,058,826)
Museums & Galleries	987,693	(612,910)	(1,476,019)	(1,101,236)
Music Tuition	593,801	(443,507)	(3,113,687)	(2,963,393)
Rangers	83,500	(45,120)	(541,050)	(502,670)
Sports	1,173,907	(107,271)	(1,807,311)	(740,675)
Youthwork	128,678	(100,104)	(2,028,013)	(1,999,439)
Service Fee	16,646,339			16,646,339
Financial Support	2,764,000			2,764,000
Total	35,711,100	(5,984,385)	(29,726,715)	0

High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Highland Council Financial Support (2023/24)

APPENDIX B

Dear Steve,

I refer to your request that the Council provides you with a letter of comfort in respect of the provision of financial support to you by the Highland Council. On behalf of the Highland Council, I confirm the Council’s commitment to support the ongoing financial sustainability of High Life Highland. This commitment is under-pinned by a number of specific and agreed actions and commitments:-

- The Council and High Life Highland (HLH) have jointly agreed to work collaboratively to review the current Service Delivery Contract, recognising the need to secure the long-term sustainability of HLH.
- The SDC review is founded on the jointly agreed principles of Affordability, Sustainability and Joint Working.
- The Council has made explicit financial commitments in its 2024/25 – 2026/27 budget plans, towards HLH deficit support during the current financial challenges. Specifically, as summarised in the table below, the Council has committed up to £2.764m of deficit support over and above core Service Delivery Contract (SDC) funding in 2024/25, this based on the forecast budget gap for HLH, mitigated by HLH saving plans. With further support in 2025/26 as indicated, and based on a forecast that by 2026/27 the need for additional deficit support beyond the SDC funding could cease.

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m
HLH Forecast budget gap	4.046	2.764	0.894
HLH Income, Efficiencies, Reductions, New Revenue Streams	-1.282	-1.870	-1.200
Net remaining deficit (funding from Council Reserves)	2.764*	0.894*	-0.306 Surplus

*up to, pending SDC review outcomes which may reduce the projected deficit.

This letter is provided in the context of HLH being a wholly owned ALEO of Highland Council, and HLH delivering a range of Public Service Obligations on behalf of the Council.

Please, through this letter, assure your Board that the Council will continue to work with High Life Highland to ensure your ongoing financial sustainability.

High Life Highland "HLH" (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS' GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

Outturn (24/25)

APPENDIX C

Category	Budget	Actuals YTD	Forecast (Year end)	Variance (Year End)
----------	--------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------

Income				
Highlife Income	7,986,704	1,952,881	7,952,928	(33,776)
Other Income	5,895,869	1,242,223	5,930,610	34,741
Services Fee	16,646,339	4,161,585	16,646,339	0
Additional THC Support	2,764,000	0	2,764,000	0
Grant Income	2,418,188	281,274	2,432,766	14,578
Total Income	35,711,100	7,637,963	35,726,643	15,543

Expenditure				
Staff Costs	(29,726,715)	(7,256,040)	(29,616,128)	110,587
Other Costs	(5,984,385)	(1,337,601)	(6,092,022)	(107,637)
Total Expenditure	(35,711,100)	(8,593,641)	(35,708,150)	2,950

Surplus/(Deficit)	0	(955,679)	18,493	18,493
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High Life Highland “HLH” (A Company limited by guarantee) – Covering the Consolidated position, including the Trading Company)

DIRECTORS’ GOING CONCERN REVIEW FOR YEAR ENDED 31 March 2024

High Life Highland (Group)

Audit Closing Report to the
Trustees

For the year ended 31 March
2024

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The matters raised in this report are only those which have come to our attention arising from or relevant to our audit that we believe need to be brought to your attention. They are not a comprehensive record of all the matters arising and, in particular, we cannot be held responsible for reporting all risks in your business or all internal control weaknesses. This report has been prepared solely for your use and should not be quoted in whole or in part without our prior written consent. No responsibility to any third party is accepted as the report has not been prepared for, and is not intended for, any other purpose.

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Executive summary

This report sets out the key matters arising from the work that we have carried out in respect of the financial statements of High Life Highland and its subsidiary High Life Highland (Trading) CIC, (together “the Group”) for the year ended 31 March 2024. This report addresses the following matters:

“
Thank you for
your cooperation
getting all the
audit requests
over in good time.
”

Audit team



Audit status and approach

Our audit has been carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (‘ISAs’) (UK) as adopted by the Financial Reporting Council (‘FRC’). The audit is complete subject to completion of work set out in this section.

We anticipate issuing an unmodified audit opinion.

Group audit considerations

We identify the Group audit components and consider the basis on which companies or other entities are included within the consolidation.

Key audit risks

As set out in our Audit Strategy Report we identified the following significant risks where we expected to focus our audit work:

- Risk of material misstatement arising from management override of controls
- Risk of material misstatement arising from revenue recognition
- Going concern risk
- Pension fund valuation

We set out in this section our conclusions regarding these key risks.

Other significant audit and accounting matters

We have also addressed the following additional matters upon which we will report:

- Review of accounting policies
- Changes to accounting policies
- Accounting for and disclosure of significant and unusual transactions
- Significant estimates and areas of judgement
- Financial statement disclosures

Evaluation of misstatements

In accordance with ISA (UK) 450 *Evaluation of misstatements identified during the audit* we are required to report all misstatements in the draft financial statements which management have not corrected, other than those that are 'clearly trivial'. We consider the impact of any identified misstatements in the financial statement disclosures.

Accounting and internal control systems

We have documented and tested the internal control systems only to the extent that it is necessary for us to complete our audit work. Our work does not constitute a full test of the controls and is not designed to identify all deficiencies or issues that may exist. However, we highlight in this report any significant deficiencies that we have noted throughout the course of our audit.

Auditor independence and objectivity

We reconfirm our assessment of the threats to our independence and that we have complied with the requirements on objectivity and independence.

Looking forward

We consider:

- Forthcoming changes to accounting and auditing standards
- Any other regulatory or legislative changes
- Planning for the next financial year
- Any other relevant issues that may affect your financial statements or business



Audit status and approach

Outstanding matters

We have completed our audit, subject to the following outstanding matters:

- Post balance sheet review procedures
- Receipt of management representation letter
- Approval of the financial statements

Subject to satisfactory completion of the remaining procedures we expect to issue an unmodified opinion on the financial statements of High Life Highland.

Audit approach

We completed our audit in accordance with ISAs (UK) as adopted by the FRC. Our audit work was carried out in accordance with our Audit Strategy Report as sent to you on 3 May 2024 and in response to the perceived audit risks, and no reasons or issues were identified which required us to change our approach and no additional risks were identified.

In our Audit Strategy Report we presented detail on our approach to setting materiality.

Planning materiality was set based on projected results for the year and was revised upon receipt of the draft financial statements. Materiality was calculated based upon 1% of income per the draft financial statements. (Please refer to the Audit Strategy Report for description of planning and performance materiality.) We reassessed materiality at the completion stage and concluded that it remained appropriate as initially determined. The materiality levels applied were as follows:



Name of Components	Overall financial statement materiality	Performance materiality
Group	£365,000	£328,500
High Life Highland	£344,000	£309,600
High Life Highland (Trading) CIC	£22,000	£19,800

Group audit considerations

As reported in our Audit Strategy Report we have identified the following Group components

Name of Components	Nature of components	Significant component?	Performance materiality	Audit reliance obtained from?
High Life Highland	Parent company	✓	£309,600	Full scope statutory audit
High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C	Subsidiary	✓	£19,800	Full scope statutory audit

High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C is the only subsidiary of High Life Highland. There are no other entities which require to be included in the Group financial statements.



Key audit risks and conclusions on key audit matters

During our audit planning we identified the following significant risks. Significant risks are identified and assessed risks of material misstatement that, in our judgement, require special audit consideration.





Risk of material misstatement arising from management override of controls

Description and audit approach

Management override of controls and accounting records is a key consideration in all audits, and the risk of this is present in all entities. We have performed the following procedures including:

- Documented our considerations of how management override of controls could occur based upon our understanding of the business and observations of the internal control system
- Documented how management identify transactions and other events that give rise to the need for accounting estimates
- Performed testing of the appropriateness of journal entries. We tested a sample of such entries at the period end and considered the need for testing such entries through the period
- Reviewed accounting estimates in the financial statements for susceptibility to misstatement due to management bias or fraud
- Performed a retrospective review of management judgements and assumptions relating to accounting estimates recorded in the prior year
- Evaluated the business rationale for significant transactions outside the normal course of business

Conclusion

We extracted all journals posted in the year, and applied a filter based on risk factors to identify higher risk journals for further investigation. These factors included journals posted by management, journals impacting income codes around the year end, round sum journals and journals that are individually material.

We have not identified any material misstatement arising from management override of controls or the posting of journals. We did not identify any significant transactions outside the normal course of business.

The pension fund valuation is identified as a significant accounting estimate, and a separate significant risk as detailed below.

Risk of material misstatement arising from revenue recognition

Description and audit approach

Under ISA (UK) 240 The Auditor's Responsibilities Relating to Fraud in an Audit of Financial Statements revenue recognition is a presumed risk.

We consider there to be 6 material income streams

- 1) Management fee
- 2) Service delivery
- 3) High Life Highland (Trading) C.I.C income
- 4) Restricted funds income
- 5) High Life membership scheme
- 6) Other income

We consider there to be 2 revenue recognition risks:

- 1) Management fee – the risk that cut off is not correctly applied to the management fee at the year end.
- 2) All other income streams – the risk that revenue is not recognised in the correct period, or classified correctly.

In response to risk 1 we performed the following procedures:

- Vouched the management fee to agreement or invoice
- Performed cut off testing on invoices at the year end.

In response to risk 2 we performed the following procedures:

- Performed cut off testing on sales around the year end date
- Reviewed the period over which revenue is recognised in the financial statements by verification to underlying agreements
- Reviewed the classification of income to ensure it is recognised appropriate in the financial statements

Conclusion

We have not identified any material misstatement arising from errors in revenue recognition.



Going concern risk

Description and audit approach

In light of the current challenging economic conditions there is a risk that the Group may not be able to meet its liabilities as they fall due. Management have prepared cash flow forecasts and a paper to support their use of the going concern basis under the current economic conditions.

We have performed the following procedures:

- Reviewed detailed cash flow forecasts to support management's going concern assessment and management's sensitivity analysis under a range of scenarios
- Reconciled the opening forecast position to the actual management accounts
- Considered how the impact of the current economic climate has been factored into the forecasts including mitigating actions taken to reduce the impact and the timing of such measures
- Assessed the disclosures in the financial statements regarding the impact of the current economic climate and the going concern status of the Group
- Considered the form of our audit opinion

Under ISA (UK) 570 Going Concern we are also required to explain in the audit report how we have evaluated management's assessment of the Group's ability to continue as a going concern and, where relevant, key observations arising with respect to that evaluation.

Conclusion

We consider the draft disclosures in the financial statements to be an accurate reflection of the ability of the group to continue as a going concern. In HLH (Trading) CIC, disclosure is made of the reliance on the parent company, High Life Highland, to enable the company to meet its liabilities as they fall due.

We agree that it is appropriate to prepare the group and trading subsidiary accounts on a going concern basis following receipt of the signed support letter from the Highland Council.



Pension fund valuation

Description and audit approach

To audit the defined benefit pension asset (i.e. HLH's share of the asset in the Highland Council Pension Scheme) we liaised with your Highland Council pension contacts and reviewed the FRS 102 pension report from your actuaries to effectively audit the asset in the pension scheme (which represents HLH's share of the asset in the Highland Council Pension Scheme).

We have performed the following procedures:

- reviewed the assumptions used for the year ended 31 March 2024
- tested the source data used for the year ended 31 March 2024
- agreed the FRS 102 pension report disclosures into the financial statements
- assessed the ability to recognise a surplus in line with FRS 102

Conclusion

We are satisfied as to the overall assumptions that have been applied to the pension scheme. The Group's share of the pension scheme assets and liabilities at 31 March 2024 amounts to an asset of £12,993,000 (2023 – asset of £6,625,000).

Under the provisions of FRS 102 a pension surplus can only be recognised to the extent that the entity is able to recover the surplus either through reduced contributions in the future or through refunds from the plan. In assessing HLH's ability to recognise a surplus, we challenged management on their unconditional right to a refund of the surplus and considered this in-line with both the scheme rules and FRS 102.

We have not been able to find conclusive evidence in this regard, and there appears to be a mixed view taken by other participants to the LGPS scheme, with some employers recognising an asset and some not. Therefore, in the absence of positive evidence that HLH have the right to recognise a surplus, we are of the opinion that this should not be recognised in the financial statements. This consistent with the treatment adopted in the prior year.

Other significant audit and accounting matters



Review of accounting policies

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice 'UK GAAP' including the Charities SORP. We have reviewed the accounting policies adopted by the Group and have found them to be appropriate and applied consistently.

Changes to accounting policies

There have been no changes to accounting policies since the previous period.

Accounting for and disclosure of significant and unusual transactions

At 31 March 2023 there was an asset on the defined benefit pension scheme of £6,625,000, at 31 March 2024 this has increased to an asset position of £12,993,000. This is primarily due to actuarial gains in the year of £6,397,000. As we have not been able to conclude positively on the ability of HLH to recognise this asset, the asset has not been recognised on the balance sheet.

Significant accounting estimates, areas of judgement and estimation uncertainty

The key source of estimation uncertainty are the assumptions used in the actuarial valuation of the pension scheme assets and liabilities. As explained above, this asset is not recognised on the balance sheet.

Financial statement disclosures

We received the updated narrative reporting part of the financial statements on 19 August and are currently completing our review of the complete financial statements. All significant presentational items identified during our review will be passed to management.

Other significant matters

There are no other matters which need to bring to the attention to those charged with governance.



Evaluation of misstatements



Uncorrected misstatements

In accordance with ISA (UK) 450 *Evaluation of misstatements identified during the audit* we are required to report any misstatements identified during the course of our audit which have not been corrected by management other than those which are considered to be 'clearly trivial'. This includes misstatements in reported amounts, classification, presentation or disclosure of reported items whether due to fraud or error.

There are no uncorrected misstatements.

Misstatements in disclosures

In accordance with ISA (UK) 450 *Evaluation of misstatements identified during the audit*, misstatements can arise in reported amounts, classification, presentation or disclosure of a financial statement item. Misstatements in disclosures may be clearly trivial whether taken individually or in aggregate, and whether judged by any criteria of size, nature or circumstances.

We have not identified any misstatements in disclosures.

Corrected misstatements

We also report any material misstatements which have been corrected which we believe should be communicated to you to help you meet your governance responsibilities.



	£ Balance sheet		£ P&L		Profit (Loss)
	DR	CR	DR	CR	
High Life Highland					
Inclusion of Highland Council SLA for overheads as a donation	-	-	2,242,824	2,242,824	-

Accounting and internal control systems

The objective of the audit is for us to express an opinion on the financial statements. The audit included consideration of internal controls relevant to the preparation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.

Throughout the course of our work we have not identified any significant deficiencies in internal control.





NOTE: under ISA (UK) 265 *Communicating Deficiencies in Internal Control to Those Charged with Governance and Management* a significant deficiency is defined as “A deficiency or combination of deficiencies in internal control that, in the auditor’s professional judgement, is of sufficient importance to merit the attention of those charged with governance”. If we are including a deficiency in this document it is therefore because we have determined it to be significant enough to be communicated.

In accordance with the terms of our engagement, we have not provided a comprehensive statement of all issues which may exist in the accounting and internal control systems or of all improvements which may be made.

In the table below, we have categorised the significant deficiencies identified in order to assist you in prioritising addressing them:

Grade	Definition	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations	Number of audit observations
		2024	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
5	Very high-risk exposure – major concerns requiring immediate attention	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	High risk exposure – absence/failure of significant key controls	-	1	-	-	-	-	-
3	Moderate risk exposure – not all key control procedures are working effectively	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	Limited risk exposure – minor control procedures are not in place/not working effectively	1	-	1	1	4	4	6
1	Efficiency/housekeeping point	1	-	1	-	-	1	-
Total Number of points		2	1	2	1	4	5	6
Factor score (total number of points times their relative weighting)		3	4	3	2	8	9	12

We set out below the current year management letter points:

Issue	Recommendation	Management Response	Significance
<p>In the audit of both High Life Highland and High Life Highland (Trading) we identified a purchase invoice that was classified incorrectly in the nominal ledger. In High Life Highland an invoice for legal costs was posted to text books/stationary and in High life Highland (Trading) an invoice for biscuits for resale was also posted to text books/stationary. We extended our sample in both companies and as a result did not identify any further instances of incorrect classifications in the nominal ledger.</p>	<p>We recommend that controls around the posting of purchase invoices are reviewed to ensure that purchase invoices are accurately posted to expense nominal codes that match the nature of the expense.</p>		
<p>We understand that the de minimis level for capitalising fixed assets within High Life Highland, set by the Highland Council is £6,000. We identified a bike repair station during our review for potential capital items at a value of £7,540 that was not capitalised. Whilst this was below our triviality level, it was above the Highland Council de minimis level.</p>	<p>We recommend that controls are put in place at the month end or year end to ensure that nominal codes are reviewed for any potential capital items.</p>		

The management letter points from the prior year and their status is set out below:

Issue	Recommendation	Management Response	Status
<p>We were made aware by Audit Scotland that 1,138 payroll cheques were issued by HLH in 2022/23 amounting to payroll payments of over £0.4m. In one month alone, 137 manual cheques were issued.</p> <p>We have queried this process and have been advised that when an employee joins HLH they must enter their bank details into the myview website (an online application where employees update their personal details and access their payslips), if they fail to do so they will receive a cheque.</p> <p>We have requested an additional sample of joiners and leavers in the year to review the processes applied.</p>	<p>We recommend that procedures are put in place to ensure that all staff who are currently paid by cheque are contacted and requested to complete their bank details into the myview website. This listing should be reviewed on a timely basis and followed up regularly to ensure those employees receiving manual cheques are kept to a minimum. This should be built into part of the induction process.</p>	<p>Confirmation of method of salary payment is already included in the induction process but some managers were not adhering to the process. Following the audit on manual cheques, work was undertaken to move all employees on to BACS payments and managers were reminded of the procedure. Since May 2024, HLH no longer issues manual pay cheques ensuring all staff are paid by BACS.</p>	<p>Cleared</p>

Issue	Recommendation	Management Response	Status
Not only is this costly for the company to issue cheques there is a risk around ensuring that payroll payments are made only to genuine staff members where joiners and leavers procedures are not being correctly followed.			

Auditor independence and objectivity

We have complied with the FRC's Revised Ethical Standard 2019 and all threats to our independence have been properly addressed through safeguards.

We identified the following threats to you in our Audit strategy report sent on 3 May 2024



Threat	Safeguards to mitigate those threats
Self review and management threat arising from the preparation of the statutory financial statements.	A team separate to the audit team performs accounts preparation work.
Self review and management threat arising from the provision of tax compliance services.	A team separate to the audit team performs tax compliance work.

No additional facts or matters have arisen during the course of the audit that we wish to draw to your attention.

In accordance with the requirements of ISAs (UK) and to assist you in reviewing the nature and extent of audit and non-audit services provided by Saffery LLP and its associates, we set out relevant matters:

The firm provides audit services to the Group in accordance with the terms of our engagement letter dated 20 March 2018. We also provide non-audit services as follows:

- accounting assistance with the preparation of the annual accounts
- tax compliance

We confirm that, in our professional judgement, we are independent of the Group and the objectivity of the audit engagement partner and audit staff is not impaired. We have considered the independence of the firm and partners, senior managers and managers conducting the audit.

Consideration of fraud

The responsibility for safeguarding Group's assets and for the prevention and detection of irregularities and fraud rests with the directors. Nevertheless, we are required to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, including those arising as a result of fraud.



Unless prohibited by law or regulation, we are required to communicate identified or suspected fraud involving management, employees who have significant roles in internal control or others where the fraud results in a material misstatement in the financial statements.

Our audit procedures did not identify any instances of actual, suspected, or alleged fraud. We will seek confirmation from those charged with governance on whether you are aware of any known, suspected or alleged frauds since last enquired in our audit strategy report.

Looking forward



Amendments to UK GAAP – Periodic Review 2024

The Financial Reporting Council (FRC) has issued Amendments to FRS 102 The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland and other FRSs – Periodic Review 2024. The amendments will affect all UK GAAP reporters and are effective for accounting periods commencing on or after 1 January 2026. Early adoption is permitted provided that all amendments are adopted at the same time. The principal changes relate to revenue and lease accounting.

Revenue

All companies will be required to apply the five-step revenue recognition model which originates from IFRS 15 Revenue from Contracts with Customers. The steps are:

1. Identify the contract(s) with a customer
2. Identify the performance obligations in the contract
3. Determine the transaction price
4. Allocate the transaction price to the performance obligations in the contract
5. Recognise revenue when (or as) the entity satisfies a performance obligation

A performance obligation is defined as a promise in a contract with a customer to transfer to the customer either a distinct good or service or a series of distinct goods or services that are substantially the same and that have the same pattern of transfer to the customer. Contracts will need to be reviewed to identify the different performance obligations. For example, contracts for sales of goods may also offer warranties, maintenance, servicing and installation. Each element would need to be considered as to whether it represents a separate performance obligation. This is determined by whether the goods or services are considered distinct ie whether the customer can benefit from the good or service on its own and whether the promise to transfer the good or service is separate from other promises.

Whether revenue for each performance obligation is recognised over time or at a point in time is determined by when the customer obtains control of that good or service. The transfer is considered to be over time if one of the following criteria is met otherwise it is considered satisfied at a point in time:

- The customer simultaneously receives and consumes the benefits provided by the entity's performance as the entity performs eg routine services such as cleaning services
- The entity's performance creates or enhances an asset that the customer controls as the asset is created or enhanced eg a construction contract where the customer controls the work in progress
- The entity's performance does not create an asset with alternative use to the entity and the entity has an enforceable right to payment for performance completed to date.

Upon transition the new requirements must be applied either fully retrospectively (which would include restatement of the comparative period) or retrospectively with the cumulative impact of the change being recognised as an adjustment to the opening balance of retained earnings at the date of initial application (which would not involve restating the comparative period). For FRS 105 the changes must be adopted prospectively.

Leases

The amendments incorporate the adoption of the leasing model from IFRS 16, Leases for FRS 102 reporters although the equivalent change has not been made for micro-entities reporting under FRS 105. The distinction between operating and finance leases for lessees has been removed. As a result, at the commencement of a lease the lessee recognises a right-of use asset and a lease liability hence bringing all leases on balance sheet. The ongoing operating lease charge in the income statement is replaced by depreciation of the right-of-use asset and a finance charge from the unwinding of the lease liability. There are some simplifications compared to IFRS 16 for example, in determining the discount rate used in calculating the lease liability, a lessee may use the obtainable borrowing rate rather than the incremental borrowing rate.

As with IFRS 16, exemptions are available for short term (less than 12 months) and low value leases. FRS 102 includes examples of underlying assets that would not be of low value to assist in applying this exemption.

Transition is required to be retrospective but without the restatement of comparatives. Instead, the cumulative effect of initially applying the revised standard is recognised as an adjustment to the opening balance of retained earnings at the date of initial application.

Other revisions

- Section 1A of FRS 102 Small Entities has been clarified to state which disclosures are expected to be necessary in order to give a true and fair view as required by law by mandating certain disclosures for UK entities which were previously encouraged. This includes going concern disclosures and those relating to material uncertainties related to events or

conditions that may cast doubt on the ability of the entity to continue as a going concern and disclosure of dividends declared and paid or payable

- FRS 102 has been amended to align Section 2 of FRS 102, Concepts and Pervasive Principles with the International Accounting Standard Board's Conceptual Framework for Financial Reporting
- Section 2A of FRS 102 Fair Value Measurement has been updated to align with the principles of IFRS 13 Fair Value Measurement although the equivalent disclosures from IFRS are not required
- Additional guidance has been incorporated relating to the application of the principles of share-based payment accounting and accounting for uncertain tax positions
- Improvements and clarifications have been made to section 34 Specialised Activities

Supplier finance arrangements

For accounting periods commencing on or after 1 January 2025 additional disclosures have been added to FRS 102 relating to supplier finance arrangements. Details are required in aggregate for supplier finance arrangements of:

- Key terms and conditions
- At the period end the carrying amounts and associated line items presented in the statement of financial position of the financial liabilities that are part of a supplier finance arrangement and the range of payment due dates for financial liabilities that are part of the arrangements compared to those that are not
- The type and effect of non-cash changes in the carrying amounts of the financial liabilities that are part of the arrangements



Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023

The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 (ECCTA) received Royal Assent on 26 October 2023 and the Bill is now law. The Act makes reforms in a number of areas which seek to tackle economic crime and improve transparency over corporate entities. Some of the reforms have already taken effect but others will require secondary legislation, guidance or systems development at Companies House.

From 4 March 2024 the first phase of reforms took effect which included:

- New rules for registered office addresses to be 'appropriate' which means that documents delivered to the entity at that address would be expected to come to the attention of a person acting on behalf of the entity and that there is the capability for an acknowledgement of delivery. This would not include the use of a PO Box as a registered office.
- A new requirement for a business to provide a registered email address.
- A new requirement for a company to confirm that it is being formed for a lawful purpose.
- The registrar will have greater powers to query and challenge information that appears to be incorrect or inconsistent with existing information. This also includes stronger checks on company names to prevent the use of names which may give a false or misleading impression to the public.
- There will also be serious consequences if companies do not respond to a formal request from Companies House which may include a financial penalty.

Other changes expected in 2024 and beyond include:

- The removal of the option for small or micro entities to file filleted or abridged accounts with Companies House.
- The requirement for all accounts to be filed digitally with Companies House and fully tagged.
- Dormant companies will need to file a statement of eligibility to ensure that the accounts meet the requirements for the company to file dormant accounts.
- Loopholes will be closed which limited the number of times a company shorten its accounting reference period which would require a reason for a request to shorten its period for a second time within 5 years to only be granted for good business reasons.
- The requirement for the identity of all company directors and People with Significant Control (PSCs) to be verified, this would also extend to members of LLPs and general partners of limited partnerships and those responsible for delivering information to Companies House.

- A restriction on the use of corporate directors which would allow only corporate directors with “legal personality” to be appointed (eg limited companies and LLPs). The directors of corporate director entities would need to be registered in the UK and be natural persons.
- Third party agents will need to register with Companies House and will only be registered if they are supervised for anti-money laundering purposes, they would be required to be registered in the UK.

Businesses should also be aware of the introduction of a new corporate offence which would apply to all large organisations (bodies corporate, subsidiaries and partnerships which meet the Companies Act 2006 definition of large). The failure to prevent fraud offence would hold an organisation criminally liable where a person associated with it (including employees, agents and subsidiaries) commits a fraud intending to benefit the organisation and it does not have reasonable procedures in place to prevent the fraud. The types of offences that could be committed include false accounting, false representation, failure to disclose information and false statements by company directors. The offence can only come into force once guidance has been issued particularly regarding what would be considered “reasonable procedures”.

Government to streamline non-financial reporting and increase small and medium thresholds

The government has announced its intention to increase the monetary thresholds that define small and medium companies with the aim of simplifying reporting requirements for certain businesses and reducing regulatory burdens for companies required to prepare non-financial information. The increase was announced as part of feedback on amendments to The Companies (Non-Financial Reporting) Regulations on which the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) consulted in 2023 and is expected to apply from October 2024. Secondary legislation is needed to formally implement the changes.

Thresholds are proposed to increase as follows:

Company and group size thresholds (net), meeting any 2 of 3								
	Micro		Small		Medium		Large	
	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed	Current	Proposed
Annual Turnover (£)	≤632,000	≤1 million	≤10.2 million	≤15 million	≤36 million	≤54 million	>36 million	>54 million
Balance sheet total (£)	≤316,000	≤500,000	≤5.1 million	≤7.5 million	≤18 million	≤27 million	>18 million	>27 million
Average employees	≤10	≤10	≤50	≤50	≤250	≤250	>250	>250



As a result of these changes, more companies will be able to take advantage of the simpler narrative and financial reporting requirements available to micro, small and medium companies; for example, the adoption of section 1A of FRS 102 which contains reduced disclosures compared to full FRS 102. Small companies can also claim exemption from the requirement to have their annual accounts audited so companies that become small under the proposed thresholds may no longer require an audit. However, there are other factors that render companies ineligible for the small companies audit exemption such as being part of a non-small group, carrying out particular business activities such as banking or insurance or being itself a public company (ie a plc, whether or not its shares are traded) so this exemption may not be available to all companies becoming small.

In addition to the above changes, the Prime Minister has also announced that the government will consult on further increasing the employee thresholds for medium companies to 500.

There are also government proposals to simplify reporting by removing content from the Directors' Report, in most cases because it is duplicated with requirements in the Strategic Report. Information that is proposed to be removed relates to:

- Employment of disabled people,
- Financial instruments,
- Existence of branches,
- Employee engagement,
- Engagement with suppliers, customers and others, and
- Important events, future developments and research and development

We will need to consider the impact of this on High Life Highland for the year ended 31 March 2025. Under the current criteria High Life Highland has breached the medium company threshold in the year ended 31 March 2024. There is a year's grace in the legislation, so if the group were to also breach this under the existing criteria in the year ended 31 March 2025, additional reporting requirements would become mandatory. This would include:

s172 statement – The Strategic Report is required to include a statement which describes how the directors have had regard to the matters set out in section 172, ie the duty to promote the success of the company.

Directors' Report statement on Business Relationships – A statement in the Directors' Report summarising how the directors have had regard to the need to foster the company's business relationships with suppliers, customers and others, and the effect of that regard, including on the principal decisions taken by the company during the financial year.

Energy and Carbon Reporting – The requirement to disclose information relating to energy and carbon emissions.

However this might change if the above increases to thresholds are implemented and High Life Highland would likely remain a medium sized company.

Planning for next audit

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Neil and his team for their assistance during the audit and propose that the audit is conducted within the same time frame in FY25.