

The new

independent-highlander.co.uk



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Beneath the rule of men entirely great

The pen is mightier than the sword



WHAT A WASTE

Unquestionably the SNP led Scottish Government has a lot to answer for. Their drive for unobtainable goals is somewhat likened to Craig Levein's, and the Scottish eleven's, futile attempt to qualify for the Euro 1212 playoffs.

The SNPs goal for self-sufficiency and waste reduction during the next decade or so is far from realistic. Never-the-less it is squeezing Local Councils into unenviable positions, and where they are compelled to try to cut costs.

Highland Council, along with many others is introducing a bi-weekly collection of their green wheelie bins. Other local authorities south of the border had a similar scheme but they found due to the proliferation of uncollected rubbish that it was prudent to revert to a weekly collection.

Some 63,000 households and 5,000 businesses have had the illustrated brochure full of conflicting advice delivered to date and before too long all 110,000 copies will have been distributed in the Highland Council Area.

As a 78 year old pensioner I find the publication somewhat confusing, to say the least.

We, I believe, are all aware of the UK Government's demand that supermarkets cut back on the number of plastic carrier bags given for 'free' to customers. Yet in the Highland Council's brochure members of the public are advised to, "Avoid odours by making sure all your waste is bagged before it is placed in the refuse bin and double bag food waste".

So lets say that all 110,000 households in the Highland Council area each has one portion of food waste per week and it is 'double bagged' we now have 440,000 plastic bags going where? Multiply that by the 26 bi-weekly collections and what do we get? A staggering 11,440,000 plastic bags being DUMPED in Highland Council area alone.

Should the intelligent members of the public take into account that in Scotland there are another 31 Local Authority areas, in which the population is possibly ten times greater than that of the Highlands, then the number of plastic bags needed to double wrap food waste is astronomical.

Surely instead of The Godfather in Edinburgh stomping around his Kingdom preaching a green revolution it would be better if he took a realistic look at the overall picture? One compromise that springs to my aged head is the suggestion that should you perchance need a couple of plastic

carrier bags to cart home your messages from the supermarket is that you use the same two plastic bags to 'double wrap your food waste' before depositing it in your green waste bin. Thankfully, (in one way), colder weather will prevent the infamous Bluebottle Fly from multiplying to a gargantuan population amongst the putrefying food waste we are all likely to generate.

However one must not put plastic bags in the blue bin! Plastic bottles with the PET and HDPE symbols only should be tendered in the said blue bin for collection. Now I am quite certain that most folk will not be inclined to segregate one type of plastic bottle from the next, and what does one do with non PET or HDPE containers? Cont next page....



OAP QUESTIONS BROCHURE?

3rd Oct 2011. Dear Mr Watters,

Under the FOI please provide me with the following information.

The name and qualifications of the person (s) who designed and wrote the "Your New Recycling and Refuse Collection Guide". Many thanks.

Response 12 Oct. Dear Mr Ross,

I refer to your recent e-mail enquiry (copied below) regarding the above mentioned subject which has been forwarded to me for response.

The household information leaflet referred to in your e-mail was developed by the team established to implement the alternate weekly recycling and refuse collection project. This project will see the introduction of an alternate weekly recycling and refuse collection service to 110 000 households and recycling services to 5000 businesses in Highland. The project, which commenced in April 2011 and is programmed for completion in July 2012, is being led by a core group of 8 existing Waste Management staff representing the strategic, operational and waste awareness elements of the service. I would confirm that the minimum job specification qualification requirement for the posts held by the senior officers involved in the group is an appropriate degree qualification and/or appropriate waste management experience. The content of all leaflets, including the household leaflet you refer to, and also all information stickers and web documents associated with the roll-out of the alternate weekly collection system was approved for distribution by this group and not by any one individual. To date, the household leaflets designed to provide information on the collection change process have been distributed to 63,000 households.

I would welcome any observations, comments or suggestions you have on improving the leaflet content before going to print for the next phase of the rollout. Whilst I would give an undertaking that the project group would consider any submission made, I would wish to emphasise that the leaflet, as the key source of information for the public, has been very successful in helping to ensure a very smooth introduction of the new collection system in those areas that have gone live. In these areas waste to landfill is down and our recycle treatment contractors report that the quality of the increased tonnage of recycle being collected is very high.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at this office if you wish to discuss any aspect of your enquiry further at this stage.

Under Section 20 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002 and/or Regulation 16 of the Environmental Information (Scotland) Regulations 2004 (EIRs), you have the right to request that the Highland Council reviews any aspect of how it has dealt with your request. This requirement for review should be put in writing to the Freedom of Information Officer, Chief Executive's Office, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness IV3 5NX, within 40 working days of receipt of this letter. The request should include details of the information requested and the aspects of the Highland Council's response which you are not satisfied with. If you are subsequently dissatisfied with the outcome of the Council's review, you have the right to appeal to the Scottish Information Commissioner under Section 47 of the Act (Regulation 17 of the EIRS), within six months of receiving the Council's review response.

Yours sincerely, Alan Bentley.

Hello Euilleam

It was good to talk to you yesterday and to discuss your concerns about the content of our recycling leaflets. I can confirm that I will ask the project group to consider the two points you raised in respect of the content of the leaflet, namely –

1) Ambiguity concerning the use of plastic bags

You made reference to the fact that on page 3 of the leaflet the phrase "avoid odours by making sure all your waste is bagged before it is placed in the refuse bin and double bag food waste" and felt that this conflicted with the message on the back page of the leaflet the phrase "avoiding plastic shopping bags" is used as an example on how to reduce plastic waste. What we are trying to avoid is people putting loose non bagged food waste in the bin which then leads to a sticking mess. I would suggest that bags for this purpose are essential and not avoidable whilst there may be circumstances where supermarket bags may be.

2) The message regarding encouraging glass recycling being made too forcefully

On page 5 you feel that elderly people may mistake this as an instruction rather than a suggestion. For clarity, I can confirm that glass bottles and jars will continue to be accepted in the refuse bin albeit we would encourage people to recycle this material if at all possible and hence the suggestion to use the redundant box for this purpose. We will look at whether or not within the constraints of space available in the leaflet we can soften the message to make it clear that it is a suggestion to use your recycling box for glass.

Could I make a polite request for you to use your proposed article in your newsletter to stress to people that the use of the recycling box for glass is a suggestion and not an instruction.

During our conversation you requested the cost of the leaflet you have received. I can confirm that the cost was 9.5 pence per leaflet.

Many thanks for your interest and suggestions.

Regards. Alan Bentley.

Reply;

Thanks Alan,

The latest 'Highlander' should be 'on the net' by the weekend.

In it I am suggesting that the H.C. refer back to The Godfather in Holyrood as instructions coming from 'the palace' is hopelessly contra.

Thanks for your second e-mail, its just a pity that other members of H.C. staff are less forthcoming.

Regards.

Euilleam.

C.F.P.A. PUBLISHES INTENT!

Once upon a time, these few words were oft favoured by one of the greatest fairy storytellers of all times, Hans Christian Andersen.

However I can write without fear of contradiction that 'once upon a time' the Invergordon Slaughter House (Abattoir) operated in very close proximity to where the proposed C.F.P.A. new development is scheduled to take place, at the old railway sidings in Invergordon.

Now what may you ask has the modern C.F.P.A. plans got to do with the old Invergordon F.M.C. Slaughter House? Well over the years many innocent lambs were brought to the slaughter at the Abattoir, and still innocent lambs are being slaughtered, albeit it in a different manner, in Invergordon. Possibly it is poetic justice that these innocents (lambs) from ICARE and the Invergordon Community Council will meet their Waterloo when the C.F.P.A. really reveal their ambitious plans for the industrial town of Invergordon.

In these 'Days of Gore' when the end of the outfall pipe from the slaughter house would be exposed at low water and the raw blood and effluent from dead animals spread over the seabed for all to see, that unhealthy environment hosted millions of Rag worms. These repulsive looking creatures were excellent sea fishing bait. But one had to handle them carefully as they could nip an unsuspecting finger.

In these same 'Days of Gore' crossing the High Street in close proximity was a spur link from the Permanent Way crossing the High Street right into the dock area. Thankfully C.F.P.A. even with their unlimited planning powers, can not re-install a 'link' in the same location as now it would mean two highways being closed at the same time.

However it is a distinct possibility that they could take a link from the mail line into the dock area further west of the town. Hence their covetous glances at the only bit of green public park in Invergordon he only bit of green public park in Invergordon .

A little birdie, well maybe not so little, tells me that the C.F.P.A. are in talks with the Crown Commissioners relating for permission to reclaim another 30 acres or thereby of foreshore, to shore up their ambitious development plans.

There again there is some obscure ruling that materials, and a facility for handling such materials, does not require Planning Permission for the erection of buildings to accommodate and process the said material provided, it is landed from sea.

Do I sense ICARE members and the worthy members of the Invergordon C. C. shifting uneasily in their arm chairs? After all the C.C. had a golden opportunity to benefit the town and community when the planning application for the smelter site was first mooted.

But, and it's a very big but, the powers that be decided, in their misplaced wisdom that the proposed incinerator would cause health problems, yet no

thought was given to the contamination that is already prevalent in the town's environs.

The well acquainted late Hamish Dun, an ardent reader and supporter of the 'Highlander,' often said 'it was common sense to believe that all the Highland Waste would end up in Invergordon'.

Where else could one find such facilities, deepwater jetties, a convenient industrial site and potential rail link?

Please read this Notice & attached notes carefully

The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Date: 26th September 2011

Invergordon
IV18 0EZ

NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION

A Planning Application has been received by the Council that may affect you.
PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS

Application Number:	11/03444/FUL
Application Type:	Full Application
Proposal:	Change of use from railway sidings to storage facility
Proposed Address:	The Old Railway Sidings Invergordon Ross-shire
Applicant Name:	Captain Kenneth Gray
Agent Name:	
Agent Address:	
Case Officer:	Dorothy Stott

What to do next?

View the application: The application and plans can be viewed now during normal office hours at:
Area Planning Office, Drummie, Goleg KW10 6TA.
You can also view the application and plans online anytime, by visiting <http://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/> and searching for reference number 11/03444/FUL



The next acquisition by C.F.P.A?

S.N.P. LAUDED (?)

Thankfully the S.N.P. led Scottish Government is easing the planning permission regulations come next spring. The present 'set up' is just that, for no sooner do we see newly elected Local Councillors taking their places on Planning Committees than they become experts on development overnight.

Elected members are largely unanswerable for some four years while in office and can, if they so wish stymie the local economy by their selfish self interest.

I, as one member of the public, would like to see the whole idea of local elected members throughout Scotland being able to overrule the *professionals*, disabled before the next Local Elections. Certainly if they must, (some say without the elected councillors on the Planning Committees democracy is at risk), they could advise but not stop properly applied for planning permissions. Failing that then elected members on the Planning Committee should be given some days of instruction as to their responsibilities.

The Invergordon Incinerator is an example of personalities imposing misguided and biased beliefs on others. And I personally believe deliberate mistruths from politicians who should know better were offered.

There again personally I believe that in some places it is who you know or perhaps what they are prepared to slip into brown envelopes that oils the keys for opening development sites.

Lets also not forget that what some believe are unnecessary applications and delays in securing permission for relatively minor alterations, costs the householder extra cash. (Professional developers suffer too, at the hands of biased elected councillors.)

It would be wrong of me to say that I am a supporter of the SNP. Or any Party for that matter, but I can laud commonsense when I see it. This sentiment I am afraid excludes Invergordon Community Council and ICARE.

Naturally one should not expect willy-nilly applications to be approved nor should we see perfectly 'good' developments being reject, on a whim.

Now one must ask whether the SNP hierarchy will take a second look at their 'hell for leather' attitude towards a Greener Environment?

The overdrive by Local Councils to accommodate Parliament's directive takes little heed of special means. The elderly, the disabled, people living in flats or the like, people living off-road to mention but a few, will be hard pressed to comply with the new regulations.

Necessity as they say is the mother of invention. Lots of householders will re-invent the old midden, especially if they are living in more remote places. (Mini landfills?) Others will have to do some sly tipping or dumping in the sea. All these possible drastic methods are contra to the Government's hopes and Parliament need a re-think before dumping gets out of hand.

Its not the general public that should be targeted so aggressively, the real blame lies with supermarkets and manufactures who pre-pack nearly everything in treble wrapped plastic. So Mr First Minister re-aim your campaign to where it will be most effective. Lets not forget the old brown paper bags and grease proof paper, it was all sustainable and bio-degradable.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

Your editor has recently acquired 4 new websites.

<http://www.independenthighlander.co.uk>

<http://www.dilettantgardener.com>

<http://www.euilleamross.com>

<http://www.pies-and-pies.com>

All sites are under construction. Pies and pies will feature loads of old Scottish recipes and more when completed. The others will be mostly used as Archive sites, making reviewing old issues easier.

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