

Highlights

Saved over 4500 disposable cups since opening in November 2022, by only using reusable cups

Encouraging customers to refill containers with goods from the zero-waste store has saved over 55,000 units of single use plastic packaging

Collaborate with a variety of local community organisations and social enterprises to demonstrate leadership and actively engage with the community Operate a 'Pay it Forward' scheme

Partner with Green Hive to host adult and youth climate cafes



The Highland Weigh

The Highland Weigh, located in Nairn is a welcoming vegetarian cafe and zero-waste store dedicated to minimising plastic and food waste. Their mission is to make sustainable choices, learn from experiences and promote kindness.

The business leads by example, demonstrating how plastic and food waste can be reduced through thoughtful choices, with all staff encouraged to provide feedback and make suggestions to develop and improve business processes. They collaborate with a variety of local community organisations and social enterprises to demonstrate leadership and actively engage with others. Working with the Social Value Lab, they are producing a Social Community and Environmental Impact report to develop the short-, medium- and long-term outcomes for the business. When complete, this will be shared with their local target audiences, including schools, local business and community organisations.

Category description: Best New Business

The Vision in Business Scotland Award recognises organisations that best demonstrate “what’s good for the environment is also good for business. This sub-category is for Best New Business (Business to be registered with Companies House and trading for less than 3 years).

Since opening in November 2022, The Highland Weigh has only used reusable cups for takeaway drinks, saving over 4500 disposal cups. They also use other reusable items such as glass bottles, napkins and egg boxes. Their Electronic Point Of Sale (EPOS) system enables them to monitor usage and cut down on food waste, with any remaining waste of this type being collected and converted to biogas. In the 18 months since the Highland Weigh opened, 4 tonnes of food waste was treated in this way. By encouraging customers to refill their own reusable containers with items from the zero-waste store, the business has saved over 55,000 units of single use packaging.

The Highland Weigh have achieved economic benefits from avoiding use of disposable, single-use items in their premises, with reduced operational costs, in addition to requiring less storage space. Water conservation is a priority, resulting in lower water bills. Similarly, energy is used efficiently, with items cooked together in the morning and the oven switched off afterwards. This contributes towards optimised energy use for heating, lighting and cooling in the store.

The business has a good customer base, which has been built through positive community engagement and provision of quality, sustainable products, many of which are locally sourced. This dual focus has enabled them to grow the business and ensure their ongoing success and profitability.



The Highland Weigh is a vibrant community hub on Nairn High Street, fostering social connections and reducing isolation. The space is used by many different people including the local school for their 'green club' and the local minister as a space to meet parishioners. They also collaborate with Green Hive to hold climate cafes, with the events offering a platform for open discussions and collective community led action. Their 'Pay it Forward' board enables customers to buy an extra item, such as a hot drink or bowl of soup, which can be donated to anyone who may be in need; an excellent example of their 'promoting kindness' ethos.

Quote from the company:

"We are absolutely thrilled to have our efforts recognised with the VIBES award commendation at such an early stage in our journey. This recognition reinforces our commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, and while there is still plenty ahead of us, we are excited to keep growing and to share what we are learning with other businesses. It is great to know we are on the right track, and we cannot wait to see what's next."