



A Flag for Caithness: Competition & Vote

Flags are an ancient art form that developed especially to clearly display allegiance and identity. They have subsequently become the premier medium for expressing social pride, indeed it is difficult to imagine events as diverse as sports matches, military parades or musical festivals without a wide range of flags being flown.

A flag for Caithness will be a free, public symbol for all to use that will:

- Raise recognition and awareness of the area nation-wide
- Express the pride in our local community
- Celebrate the heritage and culture of our corner of the country

The Competition

Individuals, schools and other groups are invited to create proposals in-line with the competition terms and conditions (below) and bearing in mind the Flag Institute design guidelines. The deadline for submissions is **29th May 2015**

An assessment panel, including representatives from the Court of the Lord Lyon, the Flag Institute, the Highland Council, the Association of Caithness Community Councils and the John O Groat Journal, will then choose the final set of designs to be put to a public vote. The designs will all be drawn to the same standard. Entries will remain anonymous during the voting process.

The vote will be held beginning in June 2015. The voting paper will be available either to be collected at Wick & Thurso Service points, cut out from the local newspaper or downloaded from various web sites. Voters will be asked to complete their names and addresses to avoid multiple voting. The result will be announced at a date to be agreed.

The winner will be registered in the Flag Institute's UK Flag Registry and will then be available for use throughout the County. Any organisation, group, or business that associates themselves with Caithness will be able to use the flag either as a flag to be flown or an emblem on produce or stationery.

Useful Links

In addition to the information provided in this pack these links will be helpful:

Lyon Court: <http://www.lyon-court.com/lordlyon/375.html>

The Flag Institute: <http://www.flaginstitute.org>

The UK Flag Registry: <http://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/flag-registry/>

"Flying Flags in the United Kingdom": <http://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/british-flags/flying-flags-in-the-united-kingdom/british-flag-protocol/>

Highland Council Flag Flying Protocol

<http://www.highland.gov.uk/download/meetings/id/16361/item25fhr8312pdf>

Brief History of Caithness

Caithness is a unique corner of what is termed Highland Scotland. It is often referred to as a Lowland beyond the Highlands and is certainly very distinct in its geography and history, with much of its early history linked to the northern isles it retains much of what makes the area distinct today. With natural barriers of the peat land areas known as the flow, Berriedale and the Ord of Caithness it is not surprising that many of the early connections to the rest of the world were via sea routes. Caithness has a diverse modern history from fishing, farming and flagstone industries to nuclear research and power and the future production of energy from wind and tidal resources.

Early history

The Caithness landscape is rich with the remains of pre-historic occupation. These include the Grey Cairns of Camster, the Hill O Many Stanes, and over 100 brochs. Numerous coastal castles are Norse in their foundations. When the Norsemen arrived, probably in the 10th century, the county was probably Pictish, but with its culture subject to some from the Celtic Church. The name Pentland Firth can be read as meaning Pictland Fjord.

Many of the names of places, and not a few of the surnames in the lowland parts of the county, are Norse in origin.

For a long time sovereignty over Caithness was disputed between Scotland and the Norwegian Earldom of Orkney. Circa 1196, Earl Harald Maddadsson agreed to pay a monetary tribute for Caithness to William I. Norway has recognized Caithness as fully Scottish since the Treaty of Perth in 1266.

Civic history

Caithness originally formed part of the shire or sheriffdom of Inverness, but gradually gained independence. Following the Act of Union of 1707 the term "county" began to be applied to the shire, a process that was completed with the abolition of heritable jurisdictions in 1747. The county began to be known as Caithness-shire.

The county began to be used as a unit of local administration, and in 1890 was given an elected county council under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1889. Wick, a Royal Burgh, served as the county's administrative centre.

In **1975** the Local Government council and the burgh councils were superseded under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 when Caithness became one of eight districts, each with its own "district council",

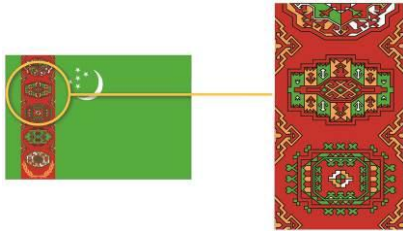
In **1996**, Caithness and the other seven districts of the Highland region were merged into the unitary Highland council area, in **2007** the Highland Council, which is now the local government authority, created the Caithness ward management area of Thurso, Wick & Landward Caithness.

Flag Design Guidelines

Below are some basic principle of flag design. Further information can be found in the Flag Institute Guiding Principles of Flag Design, available as a free download at: <http://www.flaginstitute.org/wp/product/guiding-principles-flag-design/>

Keep it Simple

The flag should be simple enough that a child can draw it from memory; else it will be too hard for people remember and reproduce.



Use Meaningful Symbolism

The flag's elements, colours, or patterns should relate to what it will represent. The flag should symbolise the area as a whole rather than any other entities which are better served by having their own flags (i.e. try not to symbolise specific towns or the country)

Try to Use Two to Three Basic Colours

Limit the number of colours on the flag to three, which contrast well and come from the standard colour set: red, orange, yellow, green, light blue, dark blue, purple, black and white. Dark and light colours will contrast well against each other, in particular yellow or white will work well on any of the other colours and vice versa.

No Lettering or Seals

Avoid the use of writing of any kind or an organisation's badge, seal or coat of arms. Writing and other intricate detail is difficult to see at a distance and will likely be unrecognisable when the flag is flying in the wind. It is better to use elements from an appropriate coat of arms as symbols on the flag.



Be Distinctive

Avoid duplicating other flags, if designs look too similar then the flags could be mis-identified.

How Will it Fly in the Wind?

Remember, the design must be distinctive when flying on a high pole in a strong wind, and when hanging in windless conditions too. Also remember that it will almost always have ripples caused by the wind.

Helpful Tips for Flag Design

Flag design expert, Philip Tibbetts, has much experience and working with local schools and communities. Here are his tips to help inspire budding designers.

Getting Started

When looking to design a flag for a town or area begin by looking at a number of sources for inspiration to find something that is important and unique. Such elements include:

- Meaning of the areas name
- Legends and folklore
- Traditional emblems and colours
- Local people, achievements and industries

There are many traditional flag symbols that could be adapted to represent aspects of the Caithness. For example a boat and a raven feature in the arms of the former County Council and the former Caithness District Council Arms, Colours are also important and should represent the area. Within the County Crest the predominant colour is blue with a black raven and gold trimming. Other colours could be used but a clear rationale should be provided for the choice made.

Examples of Best Practice

New symbols or adaptations of old symbols can be very powerful. For example:

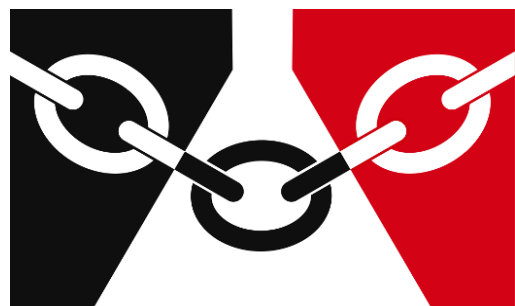


Orkney

The Orcadian flag draws on the Nordic cross as a symbol of the county's proud heritage. It uses the red and gold colours that appear in both the Norwegian and Scottish royal arms along with the saltire blue of the national flag. Together the cross and the colours are both bold and also indicate the history of the islands

Black Country

The flag features a chain to represent the manufacturing heritage of the area whilst the upright triangular shape in the background recalls the iconic glass cones and iron furnaces that featured in the architectural landscape of the area. The red and black colours recall the famous description of the Black Country by Elihu Burrit that it was "black by day and red by night" owing to the smoke and fires of industry.



Terms & Conditions

Eligibility

- This is a community competition. It is open to individuals and groups
- For all entrants under the age of 16 an adult will be required to approve the entry and agree to these Terms and Conditions. The adult may be the entrant's parent, guardian or teacher. The adult must provide their own contact details (not the child's).

Requirements

- Entries may be constructed in any medium and submitted in **A4 size**
- All entries must be the original work of the entrant(s) and must not infringe the rights of any other party.
- By entering the competition you release your design into the public domain in order for it to become a freely useable symbol for all.
- You agree to allow your design to undergo professional manipulation to make it suitable for production.
- The competition organisers accept no responsibility if entrants ignore these Terms and Conditions and entrants agree to indemnify the organisers from any breach of these Terms and Conditions.

Submission

- Address for entry: **David Sutherland
Highland Council
Government Buildings, Girnigoe Street
Wick, Caithness, KW1 4HW**
- Please package your entry carefully to avoid damage in the post. Large items can be left at **Wick or Thurso Service Points**
- Entries must be accompanied by a fully completed and signed entry form.
- Further copies of the entry form are available from **Wick or Thurso Service Points**
- Please ensure your name and contact telephone number are clearly marked on the reverse of your entry.
- Entries cannot be returned, and may be archived or destroyed. Please remember to retain a copy of your designs.
- The personal data provided will only be used for the purposes of administering the competition and will be destroyed after its conclusion.
- Unsuccessful entrants will not be contacted in respect of their entry and no feedback on any entry will be provided.
- The decision of the assessment panel and the result of the public vote are final

Disclaimer

- The organisers reserve the right to disqualify any entry which breaches any of the Terms and Conditions.

Entry Form

Instructions:

Write your name clearly on the back of your design

Complete this form and post both to the following address by **29th May 2015**

David Sutherland, Highland Council, Girnigoe Street, Wick, Caithness, KW1 4HW

Name:

Organisation (if applicable):

Address: (please provide contact details of a guardian or teacher if under 16)

Telephone:

Email:

Rationale for your design:

Declaration:

I hereby confirm [a] that I have read and agreed to the terms and conditions of the competition [b] that I am the originator and owner of the design/images submitted and that, to my knowledge, I am not infringing any copyright [c] that release these designs/images into the public domain, as set out in the terms and conditions.

Signature:

Name _____ Date _____