Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair)**,** Gordon Sutherland **GS**, Paddy Murray **PM**, Alison MacWilliam **AM,** Catherine Moodie **CM,** Kerrie Stevens **KS**

Apologies:Lynne Mahoney **LM,** Neil Hampton **NH**

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| 1. | Minute of meeting of 6 August 2019 | The minutes were proposed by **PM** and seconded by **GS.** |
| 2. | Matters arising not covered elsewhere | 1. M&A changes: GS/NH need to review Community Right to Buy update. They are meeting on 01/10/19
2. Caithness & Sutherland Town Centre Strategy comments submitted.
3. ESRA response submitted.
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| 3. | Membership and Stakeholder applications | No new applications. |
| 4. | 2019 plan |  |
|  | a. Visitor Centre | 1. 4255 visitors in July, down 9% on 2018 (Cath was away for two weeks). 4665 visitors in August, down 25% (Cath was away for one week). Year to Date is down 1%. Historylinks visitors down 17% in August. Accommodation providers seemed happy with bookings, but Grannies bookings are down. Lorraine intercepts visitors arriving by coach, so they don’t necessarily need to go into the Visitor Centre. Coach passenger numbers for the season will be available next month.
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|  | b. Business Group | 1. £27.5k has been invoiced to 97 businesses. Grace Café has closed, the Slate Shed, Luxury Lodge, Highland Escape and Castle View have cancelled, Castle & Eagle Hotels have renewed.
2. BID – **JB** met with Janis (ex Coast Candles), who is now BID Manager for Nairn. They have 280 businesses with a levy of £106k, ranging from £125 to £2500. **JB** also spoke to Graeme Ambrose of Inverness & Loch Ness Tourism BID who suggests that it is not worth doing unless the levy is at least £50k. It is possible to check the rateable value of businesses on the Scottish Assessors site. DACIC would need to build a database, get a full list of businesses and work out the levy. **JB** estimated it would take 18 months hard work to get a 5-year business plan & vote in place so the Board would need to be absolutely sure that they wanted to go down this route. A £20k seed corn grant may be available to support this process. **CM** would look into the application form as a first step.
3. Trade directory – nothing yet from Genevieve.
4. Christmas Markets – 7th December: St Andrews Fair, 14th December: Christmas Community Market, 21st December: provisionally Christmas Workshops (Candle making, wreath making, mince pie making).
5. Business Group Winter Brainstorming session – it was suggested that this could be combined with the AGM.
6. New Events – Lesley Strang suggested there was still time to organise a Food & Drink Festival in April – tbc.
7. Enchanted Forest - YR/AM would report at next meeting.
8. VisitScotland Expo 2020 – the cost would be £635 for a 2m x 2m stand and an Expression of Interest had been submitted, with the outcome being received in October. NH and Ian Watson (Royal Golf), GS and JB all expressed an interest in attending. **JB** requested that VisitScotland arrange associated industry FAM visits before (rather than after) the Expo.
9. Dornoch in Winter leaflet – events from RGH, RDGC, Castle, Links House and the Jail so far had been received.
10. Press & Journal quarterly article in weekend supplement “Why Dornoch?” – spring, summer, autumn, winter. Whilst this was an impressive spread, it would be necessary to sell advertising space around the editorial and it wasn’t certain that there would be sufficient interest. Nevertheless, **JB** would show the mock-up to businesses and ask them to contact the P&J if interested.
11. **JB** reported that there was a new Loganair flight to East Midlands airport, which started on 2/9/19. Ian Watson (Royal Golf) is already doing some advertising down in East Midlands.
12. It was agreed that Lucy Williams’ post should be extended for another year from 1st October.
13. VisitScotland Highland Tourism Conference will be held on 27 November at the Kingsmills Hotel, Inverness.
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|  | c. Developing the Cruise Liner market. | 1. Cruise ships called in at Invergordon on 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 11, 12, 17, 18 and 24 September.
2. Lorraine Goldsmith will produce an end of season report on numbers greeted.

**PM** asked whether we should continue to promote the cruise ship arrivals. **JB** felt that experiencing the town even for 2 hours may encourage visitors to return and to stay longer, which would hopefully lead to a greater spend.  |
|   | d. Month by month plan. | 1. Whisky Festival 25-28 October – to date there had been marketing via social media but the leaflet was not out yet.
2. The last community market of the season was held on 11 September.
3. 2020 leaflet – businesses are to be contacted.
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|  | e. Project Curlew | 1. NCHF bid was unsuccessful.
2. The RCGF bid was also unsuccessful. One of the main issues in both cases was that DACIC did not own the land.
3. DACIC would not now be going ahead with the ANM Option Agreement but are looking into the possibility of a car and coach park instead and **GS** suggested that the SLF would be an appropriate funding stream. There was space to put in the car park, keeping the NW corner free in case funding became available in future to put up a building. **JB** mentioned that the SLF needs to know exactly what is intended for every inch of the area. Liz (HIE who reports to SLF board) is supportive of this revised proposal. **GS** estimated a cost of approximately £300k for a car and coach park. The possibility of charging for parking will depend on where grant funding comes from. **JB** is speaking to Rachel at HIE next week so would run it by her. **PM** was of the impression that Dornoch residents think that car park, coach park and toilets are priority. **JM** mentioned that ‘modular units’ in Tain may become available in future when the Tain 3-18 school goes ahead. These could be repurposed as toilets at the site. **GS** has built up photographic and video evidence to show the problems with traffic in town. **YR** reported that emergency services have complained that they are unable to access certain streets because of poor parking. **GS** suggested applying to SLF in November and, if knocked back, apply again in January.
4. **JB** mentioned that there was a new round of Tourism Infrastructure Funds coming out soon.
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|  | f. Dornoch Hub (Police Station) | 1. The Staff Accommodation plan has been agreed & the official SLF announcement was due on 19th September.
2. RCGF applications have been invited for stage 2. This is due to be submitted by 11 October for a November decision. **CM** will have a draft ready by Monday 23 September, for £304k.
3. Kerri Stevens was appointed as Project Manager on 27 August and will produce a monthly report from October.
4. The Town Centre Fund decision was expected on 3 October.
5. A Community Drop-In session would be held on 2nd October in the Struie Room, from 3-7pm. **JB** suggested that **YR** bring some of the youth group along to the meeting so they can get an idea of the space being allocated to them. Silverback gym will be there, along with KS, JB and GS.
6. Planning application has been submitted.
7. An article would be published in the Northern Times on Friday 20 September announcing the funding.
8. **GS** reported that there was an energy survey being done on Friday 25 September. He felt that the three units should be on separate systems and that some kind of control was required. The survey should examine the roof and wall insulation and heating sources, and it should then be possible to identify grants/interest free loans to make any improvements or changes. **GS** mentioned that the building requires complete rewiring, but several possible funds that could be applied to were coming up.
9. **YR** wished to discuss what type of equipment is required for the youth room. **CM** mentioned that there was a small fund available for equipment for the youth group. There would be a kitchen at one end to do health eating with young mums etc. **YR** and **PM** were concerned that the youth room would be available for the wider community and it was no longer specifically for the youth group. **YR** hoped that it would be open 5 nights a week. **JB** mentioned that it did not make financial sense to have such a large room unoccupied during the day and alternative uses would be proposed. However, **GS** reassured YR that the room was being created predominantly for the youth group. They should be allowed to choose the name of the room and how they would like it to look. **JB** suggested making a floor plan to allow the youth group to see how it might be laid out. It was suggested that Silverback hold a regular youth session on a Friday afternoon when school is out.
10. **JB** mentioned that there are just one or two spaces still to let, but that it is now financially sound.
11. **YR** asked if there was space to site the shed for the community food larder. She has funds for the freezer etc and needs a shed. Sutherland-wide guidelines for community larders will be drawn up so that each community doesn’t have to worry about the legalities. Volunteers will check the contents weekly to take out mouldy or stale food. **YR** hoped that the youth group would take on the management. The food larder will fall under the remit of the Community Council (Community Planning Partnership), so DACIC would not have to be involved in running it.
12. **GS** mentioned that Police Scotland need to address the contamination issue – there had been oil tanks in the past as well as possible pits. **JB** will follow this up with a couple of contacts.
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|  | g. Community Development Manager report | **CM** spoke about a couple of applications that she is currently working on, including a community transport fund for buying a community vehicle, to the tune of £9k per year for contract hire for 3 years. SSE will open before the end of September and the Energy Savings Trust could be considered for the purchase of e-bikes. She also mentioned several funds which are in the background for the moment, but which could be used for a variety of other things. **CM** indicated that she had recently attended a crowd-funding workshop in Inverness, which was very useful and a great networking event. The drawback of this fund-raising platform is that it takes time to set up and manage. CM also attended a fundraisers workshop in Stirling, developing entrepreneurship, encouraging thinking outside the box. She would attend a further meeting of this group in Edinburgh.  |
|  | h. Community updates | Dornoch Community Council: **YR** reported that elections are due in the next few weeks. **YR** was still undecided as to whether to stand again, but there are a number of things she is involved with that she is keen to follow up. The Small Communities Housing Trust has the small patch of land by the cemetery and will put up three units. Negotiations were ongoing with the RDGC regarding the renewal of the lease. YR mentioned that there was a funding request for a CAB adviser for 2 hours a week. The question of the Dornoch skips was raised, with concerns that these may be closing. **JM** reported that it should stay open as a recycling facility. **YR** reported that the proposed Earls Cross development has received lots of complaints and several meetings have taken place. It was reported that the Springfield Community Development Fund had already financed the pavement but that there may be more to come. **JM** is chasing Kirkwood and Pat Munro. DADCA: **PM** encouraged everyone to buy lottery tickets which will fund the bonfire night and the Hogmanay street party. **PM** will send the link to **JB** and the Community Council for onward distribution to members. Embo Trust: **JM** reported that turnover was down 20% in the community shop and the café was toiling away. Unfortunately it has not been the best of seasons, although the bouncy castle was a success. UHI: the student residences are two-thirds full and golf student numbers are up. There are no takers yet for Ross House.RDGC: it was reported that 91% of those present at the AGM supported the new clubhouse design.  |
| 5. | Financial statement | Free reserves were standing at £21k. Several costs had come from reserves, with a few more to come. |
| 6. | AOCB | a. Dornoch Community Plan KOSDT. **JB** requested comments from the Board by Wednesday. Unfortunately the event at the Social Club had been very poorly attended.  |
| 7. | DONM | Tuesday 29 October, 7pm, RDGC |