Minute of the meeting of **DACIC** board 20 August 2020

Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair), Paddy Murray **PM**, Jim McGillivray **JM**, Jayne Pagan **JP**, Gordon Sutherland **GS**.**,** Neil Hampton **NH,** Alison MacWilliam **AM**, Shona MacDougall **SM**

Apologies: Lynne Mahoney, Catherine Moodie.

Welcome: SM was welcomed to her first board meeting

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| 1. | Minute of meeting of 16 July 2020 | The minutes were proposed by **GS** and seconded by **PM**.  |
| 2. | Matter Arising not covered elsewhere | 1. John Murray and Sutherland Tourism. John Murray was trying to establish a higher-level tourism group which he now envisaged encompassing all the North Highlands and not just Sutherland. The Board agreed that going for a BID for Dornoch was a preferable alternative.

**NH** mentioned that Moray Speyside were going for a tourism BID, which was slightly different to a normal BID and he wondered whether this would be a suitable proposition for Dornoch. **JB** responded that we had looked at that initially, but in order to raise more income, it was preferable to have all businesses involved, not just tourism-related businesses. **GS** asked when work on establishing a BID would start up again, since this had been put on hold in March. He suggested leaving it until October since some businesses were still suffering just now. Reaching the threshold required was looking positive before the pandemic, but some businesses may currently be struggling. 1. Scottish Tourism Alliance – **JB** still to action. **NH** agreed to take this over.
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| 3. | Dornoch Police Station | 1. The National Lottery (TNL) £25k revenue confirmed as:

A screenshot of a cell phone  Description automatically generatedii. Gym update – **GS** had received a new quote from Richard Mackenzie following various changes, including an increase in the size of the gym. The new quote was only 3% higher than before. Added to painting and decorating, the overall quote was up £2.4k. However some items in the SSE bid have not been required so overall this is achievable. **GS** has contacted Silverback and is awaiting a response. **SM** asked if we would look for a new partner if Silverback pulled out. **GS** felt that this would be difficult since certain aspects of the gym have been designed in collaboration with Silverback, so it was hoped they were still interested. Nevertheless, he had also approached Highlife Highland as a fall-back position. If there was no interest, **GS** could approach SSE to see if the funding could be used for other things. **JB** indicated there may be other uses for the space, but the results of the survey indicated that a gym was seen as a priority by the local population.iii. Main renovations update: A revised tender had been received from O’Brien Construction (OBC) following an on-site meeting. No further funding was available, so we have to work with what we have currently. Iain Levens would have a 16-week principal designer- contract administrator role. OBC will set up their site office in the hostel, which will reduce their bill. The Board unanimously agreed that the contract should be awarded to OBC. **SM** asked if an asbestos survey had been done, **JB** responded that this had been carried out and there were no serious issues. **JB** and **GS** would work with Iain and OBC over the next couple of weeks and **GS** stated that we hoped to have a proper opening after the completion at the end of January. The front and back entrances will look good, although some of the flooring in other spaces has not been possible on the budget. |
| 4.  | Project Curlew | 1. The Solicitor was still working on the Offer to Purchase. ANM want to see the plans with the new access route (see iii below) to ensure the ‘Gasworks’ building will still have the required access for a future sale.
2. Caintech have marked out the boundary, though **GS** has not yet received the drawings which will show where the markers are.
3. THC Jane Bridge, Senior Engineer, came for an on-site meeting with **JB**, **GS** & Duncan Macdonald (**DM** - architect). The road adoption will include a 2m extension from the road edge. She stated a preference for a one-way system – in at the existing (shared) access and out opposite the medical centre. **DM** was asked to revise the plans, to include motor home parking and potentially a waste disposal facility. Jane Bridge said a Transport Statement would be required and **JB** had submitted a draft. The waste facility requires us to work with SEPA, HC, Scottish Water and others. **JB** to discuss with **SM** with a view to **SM** following up.
4. Pre-application has been submitted for more guidance (**GS**-Gillian Pearson).
5. RTIF now has a 14 October deadline with a draft to be sent to THC by 25 September.
6. Crown Estates fund managed by Foundation Scotland is now open for bids up to £50k. **CM** will attend a webinar and work on a bid. **JB** is to keep in touch with Malcolm Macleod re THC managed Crown Estates income.
7. Scottish Curling (Iain Stewart) is intending to visit the site during the week commencing 31 August.
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| 5.  | C Moodie report | CM’s report was noted. **JB** will receive the draft RTIF bid next week. |
| 6.  | Coronavirus | 1. Back to monthly emails and continuing regular WhatsApp exchanges with the Business Group.
2. Back to monthly member emails
3. Plans for recovery phase
	1. Eat Out Help Out Scheme – Mon, Tue, Wed in August. Luigi have withdrawn but the Courtroom has joined.
	2. Tightening of hospitality rules following the Aberdeen cluster (no music)
	3. Where face coverings are mandatory, visors are no longer acceptable on their own
4. The bid to the Scottish Town Partnership for a £5k winter marketing campaign has been successful. DACIC will be working with Planit Scotland, an Inverness-based company which worked on the re-opening of the Falls of Shin. A survey went out to businesses, one or two ideas had been received, but more are required. **JB** had been contacted by the BBC who were making a programme about how communities celebrate Christmas.
5. Membership, Business Group & Stakeholder applications: Cocoa Mountain have been taken off the website and app as they did not respond by the deadline.
6. Very low number of visitors are going to the Dornoch Hub. **JB** has put up a large new sign at the Courthouse to redirect visitors. However people who have come to the Hub have asked lots of questions. The VC here will have to close in September when construction starts. MS is still on Furlough. **SM** asked if the visitor centre would let DACIC staff man the centre. **JB** responded that Catherine was using the front office for appointments only at the moment, but **JB** would follow up to see if it could be opened until the end of the year. This was the last contracted year of the Service Point/Visitor Centre, and **JM** reported that he had not heard any further news about this. The rental would be £6k per year and once the Hub was opened, we could not justify this additional expense if THC withdraw. Kincraig is looking for a new retail space and this might suit well.
7. Dornoch Stakeholders meeting (suggested by **GS**): topics to be covered include parking, speed limits, motorhomes, wild camping, toilets, policing/enforcement. **PM** reported that a Community Council meeting had been held the previous day, when it had been agreed to hold a Dornoch planning seminar in September/October with all community bodies, including the Community Council, DADCA, DACIC, THC (JM and Phil), Dierdre Mackay, ESRA, BRIG, RDGC, NHC, UHI, to be facilitated by an external representative (from HIE?). Topics to be discussed would include parking charging, motorhomes, speed limits, toilets, wild camping, a passing place by caravan park and so on. The CC felt that a development plan covering Dornoch beach area and related issues was required, to cover items such as a café at the beach (approved on an annual basis), ongoing parking problems, wild camping, a mini-golf course by the beach, beach toilets, refuse collection, ownership of the lease of the playpark, etc. **GS** replied that the majority of this fitted into the macro plan. **JB** mentioned that some of the above had already started before lockdown, and many of the community groups were part of the HIE Focus Group which she, **PM** and **NH** already attend. **SM** mentioned that she has experience of parking projects, charges, restrictions, etc and would be happy to discuss this with **JB**. **GS** asked if she would be willing to be the DACIC representative for this issue and **SM** agreed. **SM** felt that income from parking charges should be reinvested in Dornoch and that enforcement was likely to be one of the main concerns. **JB** indicated that no profit can be made from a RTIF-funded project, so surplus income would go towards funding an enforcement officer role. **PM** mentioned that not all members of the Community Council agree with the introduction of charged parking, nor does all the population of Dornoch. **SM** suggested various things that could get the community on board. **GS** stressed the importance of speaking to the businesses first, then to the community bodies, to formulate a plan before going to the community with proposals. **JB** and **PM** had had a discussion with Colin Thompson and he was now coming round to the idea of putting parking restrictions in place. **JB** mentioned that there was a Focus Group meeting on Monday, so she, PM and NH could raise this issue. It was felt that it would be preferable to have a facilitator to run the stakeholder planning session – similar to our strategy review supported by HIE in 2017.
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| 7. | 2020 Plan | 1. Summer markets: the final two markets would be held on 26 August and 9 September. The last market was not quite as busy as the first, but still the feedback was positive.
2. Visitor Centre in the Hub: see 6(f) above.
3. Historylinks: the museum is open, but footfall is down by about 50%. It is attracting a younger audience with fewer concessions. They are considering opening during the winter and perhaps offering guided walks.
4. Hogmanay Plans: The Street Party and the Loony Dook have been cancelled following discussions held the previous day by the organising committee. Dornoch Distillery have produced a new gin, with £1 per bottle donation going towards the 2021 Street Party. The Fireworks are also cancelled. **JB** will speak to HIE about holding a virtual event of some sort.
5. HIE Focus Group – Masterplan: Angela Simpson has restructured the current Action Plan with its 4 main objectives and 40 priority projects to make it easier to review and introduced ‘Status’ and ‘Risks’ columns. DACIC is the lead on many of the projects but it was felt that the Community Council should be the lead for beach access etc acting in a coordinating role, given the need to harness the energy of the various groups, such as Brig etc. The Focus Group is to overview objective 3 & 4 at its next meeting. **JB** asked the Board what they felt would happen in 2023, come the end of the Action Plan. **PM** suggested it should be a rolling plan. Currently the Action Plan is account-managed by HIE, so DACIC would need to put forward a good case as to why it should continue to have their support. **PM** mentioned that DACIC will require much less input by then, but it would nevertheless be good to retain their support. **SM** suggested that HIE may wish to use Dornoch as a best-practice example and thereby retain close ties with the town. **JB** and **PM** will take things forward on Monday at the Focus Group.
6. Lucy Williams contract renewal (currently to 30 September): The Board agreed that Lucy is a key player and **JB** suggested renewing her contract to end-March initially, to be reviewed at that time. She will work one day a week at the Hub once it is open. The Board approved this suggestion.
7. THC Town Centre Action Plan identification of Stakeholders: feedback is required by 21 August. **JB** reported that the adopted version includes most of our comments, though does not specifically refer to a 20-mph speed limit, but just ‘restrictions’. The Action Plan identified projects and key stakeholders who will make these happen. **GS** suggested that the projects ‘Main Square’ and ‘Shore Street’ should be led by the CC/THC rather than DACIC. **PM** agreed. It was also proposed to change the title ‘Coach parking’ to ‘Vehicle parking’ since it will include motorhomes or, alternatively, to rename the project ‘Development of Dornoch South, including visitor parking’. It was agreed that the ‘Wayfinding’ project should be jointly overseen by the CC/DACIC.
8. Project Manager post. Having discussed the situation with Iain Levens, Architect, it was agreed that his contract administrator role covered the project management of the Hub renovations, allowing DACIC to hold the funded position in reserve for Curlew. OBC built the police station and the three parties involved in the renovation have worked together in the past, so **GS** is confident that it will not need a formal project manager. The Board agreed.
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| 8. | Community Updates | 1. Dornoch Community Council. **PM** had already covered various issues above. In addition, he advised that the Dornoch skip would reopen for domestic waste on Fridays 10am-2pm from 28th August and that it would be fully supervised. There would be one skip specifically for garden waste and one for household waste. There will be no recycling facility (eg electrical goods). **PM** reported that they were hoping to extend the opening, but it may be a combination of volunteer supervisors and THC. **SM** mentioned that if it were a licenced site, THC would have to train volunteers and liaise with SEPA. **JM** mentioned that it was unlicensed but there is a temporary agreement in place with SEPA. **PM** reported that there is also a new kerb side garden waste collection (£45/year) starting on Monday 7 September, and also that the bulky items uplift services would be restarting.
2. DADCA: **PM** reported that the Flowers and Fairs committee has continued, they had sponsors for the flowerpots, and they hoped to have a new set of volunteers in place next year to take over from the existing team. **JB** mentioned that the St Andrews Fair had been cancelled but she would discuss with Colin Thompson whether they could at least have Santa for the children using the Castle stretch tent. **PM** mentioned that the Social Club had been repainted but not yet reopened awaiting government guidelines. It was likely to start cautiously with a few small group meetings but not for large public events such as St Andrews Fair
3. Embo Trust: JM said that there was nothing new to report.
4. UHI: **JM/PM** reported that the new building was scheduled for a January opening now.
5. Historylinks: as reported in 7(c) above.
6. RDGC: **NH** reported that the Carnegie Shield – in its Plan B format, was held last week, but generally the RDGC had had about a third of normal business this year. However, bookings for next year are looking decent. RDGC had participated in an advert on Sky to raise awareness in the UK market. RDGC would be offering half price golf from 1 November as usual, in addition to offering deals and incentives to attract further domestic visitors.
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| 9.  | Financial Statement | Net Current Assets of £41k but £20k free reserves. **GS** mentioned that we should start to bring in income from the Hub from early next year.  |
| 10. | AOCB | **GS** suggested that a discussion should take place about DACIC’s role within the proposed BID/SID. **JB** mentioned that there is a sub-committee taking the BID/SID forward and **NH** agreed that there were a lot of synergies. **JB** indicated that there was £10k available for the initial development stage to employ staff. **GS** reminded the Board that one of the issues highlighted in the MasterPlan was succession planning of DACIC. Whilst a SID would be a way to alleviate this it would also take away the Business Group income from DACIC. As we will have the Hub to accommodate staff and are already set up to employ staff it may be preferable for DACIC to manage the SID. Alternatively, if the SID is separate, we need to plan on a reduced income and potential transfers of Visit Dornoch staff. **JP** mentioned that she had received information from the FSB which she would pass to **JB** for onward distribution.  |
| 11. | DOMN | Thursday 17 September 2020 7pm by Zoom |