Minute of the meeting of **DACIC** board 17th September 2020

Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair), Jim McGillivray **JM**, Jayne Pagan **JP**, Gordon Sutherland **GS,** Neil Hampton **NH,** Shona MacDougall **SM,** Lynne Mahoney **LM**

Apologies: Catherine Moodie **CM,** Paddy Murray **PM**

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| 1. | Minute of meeting of 20th August 2020 | The minutes were proposed by JP and seconded by NH. |
| 2. | Directors resignation | Yvonne Ross & Alison MacWilliam have tendered their resignations. The board’s thanks were noted to both and especially to Alison who has done an excellent job taking the minutes.  |
| 3. | Matter Arising not covered elsewhere | 1. John Murray is giving up community endeavours and handing back to VisitScotland, HIE and North Highland Initiative for next season.
2. **NH** reported that there had been no meeting with Scottish Tourism Alliance as yet but would keep **JB** up to date with any developments.
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| 4. | Dornoch Police Station | * + 1. Contract issued to O’Brien Construction on 8 Sept – work due to start on site 28 Sept. This is for main building omitting double glazed windows and hostel as previously discussed. 16 weeks on site until 29 January. O’Brien’s Health and Safety Officer is happy to proceed. All fire fighting equipment is to be removed to the garage as is furniture, blinds etc. **JM** and **GS** agreed to help get the building ready over the weekend of the 26th/27th.
		2. Iain Levens appointed as principal designer and contract administrator. **JB** has been in touch with Zurich regarding insurance but has not had a reply yet. O’Brien’s have their own insurance for the works.
		3. Gym contract agreed with Richard Mackenzie (delayed due to COVID) – October start date with a view to finish late December/early January. There has been no response to **GS** from Silverback Gym despite several attempts to contact them. There is a deadline of 18th September and if they do not respond by then it was agreed that the work should go ahead anyway. The grant money needs to be spent but we may need to rethink the operation of the Gym. **GS** will begin to contact other businesses after the deadline has been reached. **SM** suggested that Highlife Highland might be interested.
		4. Discussion with HIE is on-going for additional items including double glazed windows, hostel, replacement boiler, water tank & pipework. If successful could be added to the main contract for March completion. JB asked for costings for renewing the central heating system. This would make the building more efficient and future proof it. Coming in at £66k including contingency. The bid also allows for the underground fuel tank to be removed (part funded by SLF) and fibre broadband to the building (part funded by Beatrice). The total bid to HIE is ~£180k. HIE will only provide a retrospective grant so potential cash flow issues need to be resolved. SSE funds due in shortly.
		5. Town centre end of site now has chippings.
		6. Some trees have Dutch Elm disease at the top of the garden. **JB** has contacted the Highland Council Tree Officer who has supplied a list of suitable Tree Surgeons to contact. This will incur costs and a quote and permissions to remove the tree need to be sought **JM** to take this forward.
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| 5.  | Project Curlew | * + 1. Solicitor still working on Offer to Purchase. **GS** has been in touch with ANM and design of shared access is now agreed. There has been no reply about potential reduction in purchase price re boundary issues. **GS** to take this forward.
		2. One-way system design proposal with THC Jane Bridge, Senior Engineer and ANM for approval. Due to potential displacement from Dornoch Caravan Park there will be no overnight parking or waste disposal for motorhomes – just daytime parking.
		3. Our draft Transport Statement was not detailed enough and Fairhurst are now preparing it. **JB** showed the Board the plan detailing where the different vehicles would go. This has been passed on to Fairhurst and **JB** has given further justification for the carpark. There would have be parking charges to park to cover maintenance and enforcement costs. **JB** reported that most businesses are supportive.
		4. Andy Hume THC – proposal to relocate recycling in Dornoch South. He would like to see a bottle and fabric bank in the car park. **JM** reported that a recycling centre in Dornoch is planned. **JB** suggested the gas works might be a good site to place the recycling bank. **GS** supported this saying that he had already suggested to ANM to contact the Highland Council about this site. **SM** suggested that SEPA should be kept in the loop as regards waste. **GS** felt that this was not DACIC’s remit but an option might be that we could offer some land with CC taking responsibility.
		5. Pre -app has been submitted for more guidance (**GS**-Gillian Pearson) but there has been no response so far.
		6. Catherine Moodie has done draft RTIF. JB now completing. Letters of support required, and she is about half-way through reviewing the application and gathering evidence. The value of the land can be used as an ‘in kind’ contribution but we still need to identify match funding. Bid due to THC by 25th September and RTIF by 14th October. Detailed contractor costings by 9th October.
		7. Crown Estates fund managed by Foundation Scotland not suitable for £50k bid, however THC also have Crown Estate allocation that would be – awaiting application process. **JM** suggested putting an expression of interest to Phil Tomalin but application process will not be known by 14th October.
		8. Scottish Curling (Iain Stewart & Maggie Wilson) – JB & GS had a Zoom call on 11th September and a meeting is planned for 21st September. Richard Mackenzie and his daughter will also attend the meeting. Scottish Curling can help with awareness raising & introducing floor curling to schools etc.
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| 6.  | C Moodie report | **CM**’s report was noted.  |
| 7.  | Coronavirus | * 1. New 6 social limit is very restrictive for large self-caterings and those taking golfing parties. Also checks needed on guests’ home addresses where restrictions apply (1/3rd of Scotland, plus some in England & Wales) and two households sharing. Face coverings for staff in hospitality mandatory now. There have been some cancellations and **JB** is keeping everyone up to date on the latest guidelines etc.
	2. Planit Scotland winter campaign starts 14th September – Dine out, dream in, discover Dornoch. There will be a photography competition ‘Dornoch in Winter’ with the proviso that DACIC has rights to the photographs to use in marketing. Also planned are Blogs, Google adverts targeting specific groups, business of the week. All aimed at helping visitors feel confident about coming to Dornoch. **JB** reported that she had been in touch with Landmark and that leaflets were going well.
	3. Broadband now live in the Hub. Better numbers in pop-up Visitor Centre, but still very low compared to the Courthouse although people are asking more detailed questions. The service will have to close for renovations on 28th Sept. THC still not opening so VC will go on-line with optional telephone service. Potential for Lou to be in the Whisky Cellars tasting room (not being used) and appointments for outside meetings if there is demand. **JM** will follow up as consideration needs to be made about how to deal with Service Point Users.
	4. Dornoch Stakeholders meeting – To be discussed: parking, speed limits, motorhomes, wild camping, toilets, policing/enforcement. There will be a HIE Focus Group on 1st October to scope. **GS** will attend the meeting.
	5. Press coverage - [Times of 12 Sept](https://bit.ly/33pAYkt) and one in [Herald](https://www.heraldscotland.com/news/18694611.links-effect-dornoch-perfect-place-five-star-retreat/). Both articles covered the whole of Dornoch giving good exposure.
	6. Report from Gael homes that October bookings for Dornoch are 2-3 times up on last year and overtaking Inverness bookings.
	7. Historylinks – financial impact to date down only 20% compared to same period last year, footfall down by one third – with fewer concessions & higher take-up of gift aid.
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| 8. | 2020 Plan | 1. 2020 Plan
	1. BID/SID – next steps. **GS** feels that DACIC is under-represented on the sub-committee. **SM** and **JP** will join **NH** on the committee, and it was commented that **SM**’s BID experience of ‘Paisley First’ will be particularly useful. **SM** and **JP** to work with **CM** to take forward funding. **SM** confirmed that she was happy to share any experience she could.
	2. **JB** has put forward the suggestion of a Christmas Outdoor Market instead of indoor St Andrew’s Fair. To date there has been no response.
	3. It was thought that Santa’s Tour on ESRA boat could go ahead but with no face to face contact.
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| 9. | Community Updates | * 1. Dornoch Community Council: **JM** reported that the CC had recently had 2 speakers, Gillian Pearson on Planning Responsibilities and Phil Tomalin on the scope of beach improvements. JM also reported that there had been 3 resignations from the CC. **PM** has written a letter to The Northern Times to explain the situation and circumstances of the resignations. All municipal projects are progressing well.
	2. DADCA: **JM** reported that Carol was back in the Chair. They are currently carrying out an upgrade – painting & repairs inside & out. They are waiting for a month before deciding how to proceed with the St Andrews Fair.
	3. Embo Trust: **JM** reported that the trust is stable, functional, cost effective and running an excellent delivery service from the shop.
	4. UHI: **JM** reported the Principal is retiring shortly and the Depute will be acting up until the position is filled.
	5. Historylinks: **LM** reported that the end of the Longhouse Project was imminent with 4 online videos due to be uploaded that will be accessed through Historylinks Website and Facebook. The Architect was due to present plans to the committee for the extension project on 18th September. There had been one case of an aggressive visitor who objected to using hand sanitiser and wearing a mask. The situation was quickly diffused but the committee will now be looking at ways to make the staff feel safer.
	6. RDGC **NH** reported that RDGC were seeing a steady flow of visitors but only a third of the usual numbers. Hospitality and retail were not doing well but prospects for next year were looking good.
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| 10  | Financial Statement | Financial document circulated. The running costs of the Hub are been funded from reserves. Some businesses are coming through with payments and **JB** has a target of taking in £500 per month. **GS** suggested that the staffing situation over the winter needed to be reconsidered (see 7c). **JB** to speak to affected staff explaining the situation and asking them to start again next year when the hub reopens. |
| 11 | AOCB |  |
| 12 | DOMN | 22nd October 2020 |