Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair)**,** Gordon Sutherland **GS**, Neil Hampton **NH**, Paddy Murray **PM**, Alison MacWilliam **AM,** Catherine Moodie **CM,** Lynne Mahoney **LM**

Apologies:Yvonne Ross,Jim McGillivray

Attending: David Cowie **DC**, Principal Planner, Highland Council

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| 1. | Caithness & Sutherland Town Centre Strategy | **DC** reported that this was all about achieving improvements in and around the town centres in the Highlands. It constituted a snapshot in time, providing a ‘health check’ of towns, and the method gave a consistent approach to towns across the Highlands. **DC** indicated that he would take DACIC’s comments into account when finalising the actions. He stressed that projects coming out of the actions would not necessarily be HC led, some will be community led. There would be no extra funding available.  **JB** outlined some comments concerning Dornoch Square, indicating that it was a multi-purpose space with lots of different users and uses throughout the year. JB indicated that there was no desire to pedestrianise the space, but the biggest concern was finding an alternative place for coaches to park. **DC** agreed that the wording could be tweaked. JB highlighted the need for all user groups to be consulted before any changes are implemented.  **DC** mentioned that there may be developer contributions for community and sports facilities in the Dornoch area and he recommended that CM/JB follow this up with Daffid Jones. The Local Development Plan is updated annually (around November) so DACIC should send in project updates so that they are included in the action programmes.  Regarding the NC1 cycle track, **DC** mentioned that this was misinterpreted, it was not the intention to divert the route from the Kyle of Sutherland but that Dornoch might become a spur. However, he indicated that it may simply be dropped from the strategy. **JB** preferred to stress the message that Dornoch is encouraging cycling, both by locals and visitors, but not by diverting the NC1.  **JB** reported that there is currently no vacant shop space in Dornoch. Retail is doing very well, it is the leisure facilities which are lacking.  **GS** raised the issue of the flower beds and benches at Argyll Place, which are not being maintained by developer. **GS** asked if the community council could take it over. **PM** rejected this, saying it was the developer’s responsibility. **GS** asked **DC** if he could look into this since the flower beds and benches enhance the square. **DC** requested **GS** to contact him directly about this.  It was noted that the deadline for submission of comments on the Town Centre Strategy is 23 August. **PM** mentioned that the Community Council meets 21 August so will be pushed to submit comments. **JB** will draft comments for DACIC, **PM** will coordinate with the Community Council and DADCA and a joint submission will be made. **JB** is to create an organisational account for DACIC for an online submission. |
| 2. | Minute of meeting of 2 July 2019 | The minutes were proposed by **GS** and seconded by **PM.** |
| 3. | Matters arising not covered elsewhere | 1. Mem &Art changes GS/NH requested by Scot Gov and needed for AGM – NH indicated that a date has been set. Check SLF capital funds rules as some changes need to be notified to them. 2. Wedding Fayre was held on 19 July. Approx. 20 suppliers attended. The event was not very busy but it was a useful networking opportunity. If it were to be repeated it should be held in spring or autumn. Embo Hall were present; they have a whole wedding package on offer. |
| 4. | Membership and Stakeholder applications | 1. Dornoch Mews (SC) 2. Connell Outdoor Pursuits (archery, fishing, birdwatching etc) |
| 5. | 2018-9 plan |  |
|  | a. Visitor Centre | 1. There were 4789 visitors in June, up 26% on 2018 (year to date up 16%). Historylinks similarly up 17% at 2485 April – June. |
|  | b. Business Group | 1. £24k had now been invoiced to 100 businesses. Pilcher Bank House is closing in September and reverting to a residential property. Links House has renewed. Eagle and Castle to be followed up. 2. BID – **JB** had an invitation to meet with Dingwall coordinator George Murray, [www.dingwallbid.com](http://www.dingwallbid.com). They go to ballot on 31/10/19 to decide on whether it should be a BID. If so, payment is based on rateable value (even if on SB scheme). They have 300 businesses and expect to take in £120k p.a. **JB** talked through the pros and cons of establishing a BID. There are options for Tourism or general BID. Further information is required. 3. Trade directory – awaiting feedback from Genevieve Duhigg. 4. Christmas markets – carried over to next meeting. 5. Winter brainstorming – carried over to next meeting. 6. New events – **JB** will arrange to speak to Lesley Strang, who has joined the business group, and has extensive experience in wedding and event management, including larger events such as Belladrum & Edinburgh Hogmanay. 7. Enchanted Forest – YR to report at next meeting. 8. VisitScotland Expo 2020 – **NH** to speak to Chris Taylor (HC) about taking a stand. This is an industry to industry event which will take place in April in Aberdeen. **NH** to follow up re costing, who might be interested in participating in a wider Dornoch stand. Funding is potentially available from HIE and VS, as a first-time participant. 9. WorldHost Survey – they are changing parameters which will make it more difficult to become a WH destination. **JB** will send out information to members. 10. An ATM is now available at the Spar Convenience Store. **NH** suggested to the ATM company that Grannie’s may be a potential location. 11. NHC will contact all main businesses about their staff doing SVQs in hospitality and catering. |
|  | c. Developing the Cruise Liner market. | 1. Ships are due on 1,2,4,5,6,7,8,11,12,13,15,16,18,20, 21,22,25,26,27,31 August |
|  | d. Month by month plan. | 1. Highland Games 2nd August 2. Festival Week 3-10 August 3. Markets 14 & 28 August 4. 2020 leaflet – businesses to be contacted. |
|  | e. Project Curlew | 1. Ironside Farrar Report. This is almost complete, but RDGC has indicated that the Driving Range is not viable. Other suggestions were crazy golf and adventure golf. **NH** indicated that the longer term plan for the new club house is for a driving range, fitness room, meeting room, café etc, although this was still 6-7 years off. 2. Flood risk & contamination assessments. SEPA are happy with the positioning of the building outwith the flood plain. 3. Contamination. THC Contamination Officer requires a ground investigation (GI). The associated costs cannot be met by SLF2 alone, so we were advised to delay our application until amount of VDLF is known. 4. A schedule of Abnormal Costs that may result from the GI & remediation has been prepared by Fairhurst up to a total of £400k! We need to know the result of the GI before the development costs are clear. The GI s to the north and south have been substantially clear, however. 5. ANM Option Agreement - £17.5k. If DACIC decided to go down this route, it would establish certain conditions, eg funds refundable if GI is not favourable. **GS** and **JB** to progress, 6. SLF2 delayed until VDLF available. Next deadline is November, result in January, by which time the result of the HCHF bid and stage 1 capital regeneration scheme will be known. If either of these funding bids fails, the project will not go ahead. 7. A meeting had taken place with RDGC, who agreed to put up the funds for the option agreement. If the project does not go ahead, the repayment terms will be flexible and over a long term. 8. Tennis court – RDGC had asked for this to be removed from the IF report as they are already in discussions with DACC about moving the current court from RDGC to the School. A Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) had been included in Project Curlew instead. (This re-opened the debate about the best location for a tennis court but was restricted as neither **YR** nor **JM** was present) |
|  | f. Dornoch Hub (Police Station) | 1. Staff accommodation (seasonal hospitality staff) was now planned in place of a childcare facility. **JB** has cleared this with the HMO officer at HC. Because of VAT implications, any contract has to be with the employer, not the employee. **JB** submitted a revised plan to SLF today and should have a response mid-end August. 2. Beatrice application was successful (embargoed) - £50k of which £30k for the gym and the remainder for other renovations – roof, painting, ground clearance etc. The Town centre fund response is due in September. SSE Sustainable development fund application released in October. 3. Next stages are that the M&E survey and energy survey are to be carried out. Police Scotland are due to begin clearing the building next week, following which it was hoped to get more regular access to the building. **JB/GS** to follow up with potential tenants. 4. Project Manager vacancy: JB has received one application so far from a good candidate. The deadline is a week away, so she hoped for more applications. |
|  | g. Community Development Manager report | **CM** mentioned that the main points have already been raised above. She was going to attend a crowd-funding workshop in Inverness which may be extremely useful if Curlew goes ahead. **CM** reported on various other funding applications – some can be flexible and diverted from the Hub to Curlew, or another project, if necessary. |
|  | h. Community updates | Dornoch Community Council: **PM** reported that the CC were aware of problems with parking at the beach and they are working on a solution.  DADCA: Festival week has a good team and attendance numbers are excellent.  Embo Trust: nothing to report.  NHC Business Unit: nothing to report  Historylinks: **LM** reported that Heritage Lottery funding had been secured for the Longhouse Project  RDGC: **NH** reported that plans are well advanced for the new clubhouse and will be presented at theAGM. |
| 6. | Financial statement | Carried over to next month. |
| 7. | AOCB | * 1. Consultation on Common Good Lease to ESRA: <https://www.dornoch.org.uk/userfiles/file/news/proposal-to-dispose-by-of-land-by-lease.pdf>   A discussion took place about this proposal. DACIC supported the need for a new building, but there was some disagreement about the proposed size and location. **JB** to draft a DACIC response to send round members for comment.   * 1. DONM: Thursday 19 September, 7pm RDGC   2. Iain Watson is new Director of Leisure Operations at Royal Golf Hotel, which is to be open weekends during the winter. He is seeking to expand off-season activities and would be keen to discuss opportunities with DACIC. |