Present: Joan Bishop (Chair) **JB,** Gordon Sutherland **GS**, Neil Hampton **NH**, Jim McGillivary **JM**, Lynne Mahoney **LM**, Yvonne Ross **YR**, Paddy Murray **PM** Alison MacWilliam **AM**.

Apologies:

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| 1. | Minute of meeting of 30 October 2018 | Proposed by **GS** seconded by **PM.** |
|  2. | Matters arising not covered elsewhere | 1. Democracy matters: **JB** submitted the consultation response; the main issue highlighted was that the community wished to have more control of the Common Good fund.
2. New Year leaflet: this was now out. **YR** indicated that she would like leaflets to be available in the summer in order to encourage visitors to return for New Year. **JB** replied that the Street Party was covered in the Dornoch leaflet for that reason, but it was difficult to get detailed information for the full New Year leaflet until November.
3. VisitScotland – Caroline Robertson meeting 26.11.18: this was a productive meeting and Caroline would like to come in January to meeting with the business group. Those businesses not on the VisitScotland website would be encouraged to join; there would be no charge. 2020 is the Year of Coasts and Waters; Dornoch is well placed to benefit from this.
4. Wedding Event: Alyson Mackay has booked the Social Club to host an event on the Friday 19th July. She has started advertising, helped by JB and Lou. It would be advertised in the Dornoch leaflet this year free of charge, as a new start-up.
5. Dark Skies: **AM** reported on this and suggested it required someone with a keen interest in astronomy to take it further. **YR** mentioned that Adrian Allan, who has a telescope, might be interested. **YR** to follow up.
6. Cityheart Student Residences**: JB** reported that Cityheart had approached the Castle Hotel to service the rooms on their behalf. Colin submitted a business proposal but Cityheart was unwilling to agree to a reasonable rate and this fell through. **NH** mentioned that he had approached them about using the residences for temporary summer staff and caddies, but the rates were much too expensive and Cityheart were unwilling to reduce the costs, despite the fact that the residences were virtually empty over the summer. **YR** wondered why North Highland College UHI did not offer a green-keeping course, indicating that the nearest one is at Elmwood. Scott and Ian are verifiers so it would make perfect sense to offer the course in Dornoch. **PM** was meeting North Highland College management later and would raise the above issues.
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| 3. | Membership and Stakeholder applications | Helen Needs was accepted as a new member. |
| 4. | 2018 plan | Calendar update |
|  | a. Visitor Centre | 2153 visitors in October down 35%, 1037 visitors in November up 17% - year to date 30330 up 6%. Down in October perhaps because of the 7-week summer holiday, so fewer visitors taking a break later in the year.  |
|  | b. Business Group | Kincraig – reported that the house, which includes the shop, is for sale. There are currently no alternative vacant retail spaces on offer to rent. The former Bank of Scotland is vacant, as is the former shop between at No 9 and Barn Owl Bothy. An alternative future option may be a partnership with the Visitor Centre should the Council decide to withdraw.Dornoch Inn has been taken over by the Mackay family who own Dornoch Farm Butchers, with the son running the restaurant. He has been very busy so far and will likely become a business member. |
|  | c. Developing the Cruise Liner market. | 1. Thistle Tours Fam visit 24 November went very well. This is a new business set up by Maxine Smith and she is keen to work with businesses on a discount voucher scheme.
2. **JB** recently attended a Webinar and gained a few good contacts. The key message which came from the webinar was that cruises now attract a much wider age group. Dornoch can offer a range of activities to suit this market.
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|   | d. Month by month plan. | 1. Off Season marketing: five banners have gone up around the area - at Harry Gow (North Kessock), Royal Marine Hotel (Brora), Kingsmills Hotel (Inverness), Kincraig in Eastgate Centre and the Carnegie Courthouse.
2. Dornoch 2019 leaflet: **JB** has contacted businesses but there is not yet got sufficient commitment to move forward. To follow up in the New Year.
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|  | f. Project Curlew | 1. Fund Raising sub-committee update: nothing to report.
2. Scottish Land Fund Stage 1 Application: this has been approved. NHCT has granted £15k to the project and £20k will come from SLF for fees for consultants and contaminated land assessment for the planning application. **GS** is meeting Julian Farrar in Edinburgh on 3 January. He will be ready to start on the project immediately, and it will take 8-10 weeks to complete.

**GS** reported that his meeting with ANM went well. They are ready to sell the land for a valuation from Sinclair Mackintosh. Three options were put forward: (A) buy the original section of land (£133k); (B) purchase the original section plus the land previously looked at by RDGC for a tennis court and coach park. It was agreed that a coach park was important. (C) the above plus the big bit down at the bottom (an extra £5-10k), which would enable RDGC to put in a driving range if they so wished. It was agreed that (C) would be the preferred option, at a total cost of £175k. This would require a 10%, non-refundable deposit. **GS** asked about the possibility of RDGC paying the 10% deposit. **GS** to check with SLF about taking an option on the land. **GS** and **NH** to work on drawing up an agreement in principal. 1. Natural & Cultural Heritage Fund: **JB** indicated that they are looking to fund visitor experiences with a cultural and/or heritage slant. **GS** wondered whether the application could be supported by Highland Council – **JM** to follow up.
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|  | g. Dornoch Police Station | 1. SLF Stage 2: in order to complete this, it is necessary to highlight the community benefit and show the source of renovation funding.
2. **GS** spoke with Police Scotland; since they have not been through this process before, the application has to go through the Board and approve the discount requested. The purchase cost of £300k, was proposed, including a 20% discount, so the project should be acceptable to SLF. To support this, Police Scotland might retain a space free of charge for 10 years. It was agreed that this would be very beneficial to the Dornoch.
3. Gary Ballantyne, the HC building control officer was coming on Monday to look over the building. In particular the fire protection is complex since the building would be for mixed use.
4. It was hoped to start to bring in income from some tenants right away, including the gym. The crèche would move in the following year, in 2020.
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|  | h. Community Development Manager | There had been no applications to date, which was very disappointing. **GS** suggested increasing the salary by shortening the duration of the post to 18 months. The use of a head-hunting agency was also discussed, and it was felt that, whilst expensive, it may be a good investment in the longer term. **NH** to follow up.  |
|  | i. Community updates | 1. Dornoch Community Council: nothing to report.
2. DADCA: **PM** reported that DADCA has had a great year. Street party preparations were going well, the bonfire night went well, St Andrews Fair went well, street lights have gone well.
3. Embo Trust: **JM** mentioned that the Community Hall opened 10 days ago and it was a lovely building. The Trust are now looking for someone to run the café.
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| 7. | Financial statement | **JB** reported free reserves of £24k. |
| 8. | AOCB | 1. DONM: Tuesday 15 January, 7pm at RDGC
2. A portable defibrillator for events is now located in the Castle Hotel. 12 people now AED trained.
3. PVG (Protection of Vulnerable Groups), Child protection training – **YR** will be running a couple of courses, based on an adapted version of the HC policy and would let the community groups know the dates.
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