Minute of the meeting of **DACIC** board 21st January 2021

Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair), Paddy Murray **PM,** Neil Hampton **NH,** Lynne Mahoney **LM,** Gordon Sutherland **GS,** Shona MacDougall **SM.**

Apologies: Catherine Moodie **CM,** Jayne Pagan **JP,** Jim McGillivray **JM**.

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| 1. | Minute of previous meetings | The minutes for three meetings: of AGM 10th December 2020 and Minute of Director’s meeting 10th December 2020 and  Minute of Director’s meeting 12th January 2021 were proposed by **PM** and seconded by **GS**. |
| 2. | Matters Arising not covered elsewhere | There were no matters arising. |
| 3. | Dornoch Hub | 1. OBC & Architect third invoices have been received and grant claims made. To date £142k out of £462k has been billed. 2. **JB** noted that OBC has provided a list of extras, many of which had not been previously advised. Iain Levens will now report any extras at the end of each month to avoid a build-up. £15k of contingencies has been spent so far with extra £5k still to come off. That leaves £15k contingency remaining. From site visit yesterday extras relating to flooring in the kitchen and bathroom in the hostel, painting of new copper pipes and window facings around new windows to be costed. 3. **GS** suggested that visits for other directors to see progress could be arranged (COVID restrictions to be adhered to). 4. Money from Scottish Land Fund and HIE had allowed the petrol tanks to be filled in & a certificate will be issued with the health & safety file. This would allow future development of the ‘hill’ and **GS** is working on this with Iain Levens to find out what options there may be and will report back to the Board. 5. RM Mackenzie - windows have been fitted in the gym, the painters are starting next week. The toilet is still to go in. Silverback Gym are happy with progress. 6. The last monthly meeting and site visit with Iain Levens was on the 18th of December and the next meeting will be via Zoom on 25th January with Iain and OBC. 7. **GS** is working on the preparation of leases for tenants with the Solicitors. |
| 4. | Project Curlew | 1. Offer to Purchase is on hold until GI/Planning/RTIF known. 2. [Planning application](https://wam.highland.gov.uk/wam/applicationDetails.do?keyVal=QHGRX4IHIFE00&activeTab=summary) – layout updated, transport statement updated & drainage being redesigned to suit – lighting design awaited. 3. Crown Estates – now Highland Coastal Communities – full application by 31st January for £100k 4. TCF – £28k awarded against £58k requested. 5. RTIF – on wait list at £246k rather than £375k requested because this grant cannot support visitor attractions and the user numbers supplied in the masterplan included the summer mini curling and the golf driving range. **JB** challenged this, but without success, to remove the driving range users as the SUDS basin now rules the range out. **JB** had a meeting with Leona Joiner THC who is our contact for RTIF. To move up the wait list, we need to meet the conditions (planning permission & land purchase). If we do that before the others, we will become top of the list and should one of the approved projects fail to meet their conditions we can take its place. 6. Plan A is therefore £158k short (assuming HCC £100k granted). **GS** stated that for RTIF, the project would have to go to Public Contract Scotland which may result in lower costs. He also mentioned that **CM** had found another potential funding source. 7. Plan B is potential partnership working with THC Shane Manning to develop a small area as a ‘car only’ park for this year with the TCF and Common Good funds. **JB** has approached J & S Gunn via email to see if this would be feasible. This will also be mentioned at the meeting with O’Brien’s on 25th. Another possibility is Miller’s in Inverness. 8. **PM** asked if we were in danger of losing the money to buy the land if we haven’t the funds to develop immediately. **JB** thinks not but will update our funding officer at SLF. **PM** asked about other grants. Beatrice is currently open, but they rejected our application for Dornoch South last time. **GS** suggested HIE. **JB** to take these possibilities forward. 9. Ground Investigation complete, and there is no potential contamination to water. However, some asbestos has been found so further pits have been dug to determine the spread, awaiting results. There may be budget for remedial work in VDLF. |
| 5. | C Moodie report | **CM’s** report was circulated. |
| 6. | Coronavirus | 1. Visitor management plan - consultant led workshop (facilitated by HIE) with 16 to 18 stakeholders – Fire Scotland, THC, community council, DACIC, HIE, businesses & community groups next Tuesday. Some 1:1 meetings will follow e.g. with Police Scotland. The aim is to review the problems experienced in 2020 and works towards potential solutions (in a similar manner to the Beach Group meeting). Shane Manning thinks four workshops will be needed in all. One each for problems and solutions for businesses and a similar two for the community. This is more than the consultant is commissioned to do but they will help with creating a community survey. It was thought that a leaflet drop and social media could be used to involve the residents in the planning process and advertise workshops. 2. With businesses closed due to Lockdown, details of Grants available have been circulated. T 3. The closure grant once awarded is repeated every 4 weeks that lockdown continues. Other specialist grants are in the pipeline. 4. Marketing for the ‘new normal’ – various webinars have been attended and information shared. **JB** reported that the general feeling is people want to go away to small places in rural and coastal locations, for which Dornoch is a good match. 5. ‘Love Local’ grant application for £4,950 successful – to update and relaunch the App & to purchase a Go Pro Camera to allow time lapsed videos. 6. Visit Scotland grant report has been submitted. **JB** is speaking to Chris Taylor about new grant for making DMO’s more efficient. For example, **JB** suggested that a customer satisfaction panel with emoji touchless buttons for visitor centre would be easy to use. The cost would be £1100, the screen stores data ‘in the cloud’ which can be analysed. Statistics show that 50% of people will use these. The unit is freestanding and has a battery and sim so can be moved around. JB also suggested a Head Counter for people coming in and out of the building. 7. Possible Digital Grants for website update. Val MacLennan at Digital Routes has quotes £2500 to update and improve user experience (or could be included in f above). 8. A Business Group Zoom meeting has been planned for 1st February at 4pm, to see how everyone is feeling, how grant support is working, plan for reopening, discuss future bookings, etc. |
| 7. | 2021 Plan | 1. The draft 2021 plan was circulated. 2. BID/SID following last year’s plan in terms of timing. It was felt that there was a need to engage with businesses to gain support for the grant application **SM** and **JP** had worked on. **SM** felt dialogue essential and that the business need to start having more of an input. Letters of support are needed with the application ideally from both tourism & non-tourism businesses. **JB** will mention this at the meeting on the 1st February. 3. Assets Manager: there are two good candidates for this post. Interviews are tomorrow. 4. Plan for opening of Hub: The newly appointed Manager will work on getting the Hub open, ideally in April. 5. **JB** gave fair warning that in 2023 she will step down (after 10 years), so succession planning is very important. A BID/SID in place by March 31st 2022 would ensure continuity. **GS** felt that was achievable. 6. Visit Dornoch Marketing and Visitor Services in 2021 will be dependent on business group or grant support. 7. Events – **NH** reported that the Whisky Festival is planned for 29th-31st October. It will be a UK based gathering and perhaps on a smaller scale. The Highland Games is scheduled for 6th August. Confirmation of all events is COVID dependent. |
| 8. | Community Updates | Dornoch Community Council:   1. **PM** sending a letter of support for Free church project on behalf of CC who are delighted to see investment in the historical building. The caveat is that the activities are primarily church activities and not displacing those in community buildings. 2. The CC feel that they have a role to coordinate community groups with buildings to understand future plans and avoid competition for grants. This would feed into the Master Plan. 3. **PM** reported that there were now 8 community councillors (9 max). 4. The CC is working with THC to plan a refurbishment of the toilets. So long as a sensible specification and price can be agreed, Common Good funds will be used. 5. The burn is being cleaned. 6. Road between Dornoch and Sewage works has ruts, PM is in daily contact with Scottish Water to resolve.   DADCA:   1. **PM** reported that the Social Club was closed. 2. It was hoped that Flowers and Fairs would be successfully taken over by the DADCA board. Viki Mackenzie has taken this on. There is a sponsorship scheme for the beds and baskets. 3. **PM** felt that while DADCA can provide umbrella cover for its sub-committees, it is a potential strain on DADCA if the succession planning fails and responsibility reverts to the board. DADCA is concerned if this would happen the Hogmanay Street Party for example. **GS** suggested a few pages in The Northern Times to explain the organisations and appeal for volunteers. **JB** agreed and thought a series of articles might work but someone would need to head this up. **JB** also suggested a leaflet drop and a volunteer fair. This item is to be put on the Agenda for the next DACIC AGM to launch as a concept. 4. **PM** suggested that the Parent Council may provide a source of volunteers.   Embo Trust:  No report  UHI:   1. **SM** advised that recruitment of a new Principal has been deferred to February/March as they wanted to do face to face interviews. 2. Burghfield campus build project is on time and on budget.   Historylinks:   1. **LM** reported that the museum received a Resilience and Recovery Grant from Museums Galleries Scotland to £7,700. This has enabled it to keep on the Museum Assistant over the winter. She is organising themed walks which will be filmed and used online as well as live versions taking place during the summer. She is also planning some traditional craft workshops for the summer. 2. The museum Accreditation has been frozen for a year and Audit for that purpose is gradually being done. 3. The extension project is progressing well in the circumstances. 4. There are new exhibitions going up for summer.   RDGC:   1. **NH** confirmed that the club is still taking bookings. A few bookings in April have been deferred but looking positive for the future. Lots of people still wanting to come. 2. Delighted that Golf is allowed under the COVID restrictions in Scotland. |
| 9. | Financial Statement | The financial statement was circulated. **JB** suggested that as most business group members only paid in September, that pro rata half should carry forward to 2021-22. |
|  | AOCB | 1. Communities for Coul: **GS** is involved with a community led project to get planning for a golf club at Coul. A website is to be launched at communities4coul.scot. **GS** listed the benefits to the community, one of the main ones being economic.   **PM** felt that the environmental side of the project would be a very important point and possibly the lead factor.  **GS** explained that the two points go hand in hand with many of the jobs being ‘green’ jobs and the proposed hotel an Eco Lodge. There would be lots of initiatives to address the environmental issue.   1. Request from Mark Robinson, Free Church: Plan to develop the upstairs of the Church. Elements of displacement were discussed. **JB** will send a letter raising the same points as the Community Council. 2. It was agreed that the Directors would accept Mark Robinson’s application for personal membership. 3. RDGC – Common Good Consultation: **PM** confirmed that the Community Council unanimously supported the plan. **NH** and **PM** then left the meeting before discussion. It was agreed to support the proposal which represents a significant annual contribution to the Common Good Fund (up to £50k) while protecting RDGC in lean years (such as 2020). It allows RDGC to build a new clubhouse to reflect its status as one of the best courses in the world and continue to attract visitors in years to come which benefits the wider community. **JB** to draft up a letter of support. |
| 11. | DOMN | Thursday 18th February 4.30pm via Zoom. Thereafter 3rd Thursday of the month. March also 4:30pm then 7pm from April |