

**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF
DORNOCH AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (DACC)
HELD ON MONDAY 20TH MAY
VIA ONLINE CONFERENCE CALL**



PRESENT

Graeme Ross – Vice Chair - GR
Patrick Murray – Treasurer - PM
Jerry Bishop – JB
Ann Durrand – AD
Maggie Hope – MH
David MacBeath – DM
Jimmy Melville – JM

IN ATTENDANCE

Lou Rollason – Minutes – LR
Jim McGillivray – JMc
Joan Bishop - DACIC
Phil Tomlin – Ward Manager – PT
Norman Ross – Earls Cross & Station Road Woodland

APOLOGIES

Cath Macangus – Secretary – CM

	PRELIMINARIES It was unanimously agreed that PM would chair the meeting.	
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Apologies were received from Cath Macangus.	
2.	DECLARATION OF INTEREST JB stated that he was a member of Dornoch and Community Interest Company (DACIC) (and married to Joan Bishop), however he did not believe that made it an issue. PM stated he was a member of the DACIC board and thus he could not vote on any matters regarding DACIC.	
3.	ADOPTION OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING JMc asked if he had any outstanding action points – JB confirmed the only one he had was to invite Phil Tomlin, so no further action points were required. PM asked GR if the minutes had explained enough about the conflicts of interest points in the previous two meetings. GR confirmed this had been sufficiently explained.	
4.	MATTERS ARISING (NOT OTHERWISE COVERED IN AGENDA)	
a.	RESIGNATION OF CHAIR YVONNE ROSS (YR) PM thanked YR for her service and for being a pillar of strength to the community and the council in general. Her outstanding knowledge of Dornoch, the people, the locations and the relationships that make the town throb had been exceptional. PM continued that it was extremely sad that she had resigned not only as Chair but also from DACC altogether. PM & JB suggested	ALL

	recognising, in some way YR for her 20+ years of service and asked the board to help suggest ideas on this. Action Point – All Members: to suggest ideas for a way to recognise Yvonne Ross’s service.	
	ITEMS FOR DECISION	
5.	PLANNING & LICENCING APPLICATIONS	
a.	N20/01659/FUL - CHANGE OF USE FROM OFFICES TO 1NO DWELLING AND 1NO BED & BREAKFAST. OLD COUNCIL OFFICES, THE MEADOWS, DORNOCH IV25 3SF. ALTERNATIVE REFERENCE: 100251476-001 (DOCUMENT CIRCULATED) Decision: No objections.	
b.	20/01481/FUL - ERECTION OF HOUSE AND GARAGE. LAND 100M SE OF LITTLEBURN CLASHMORE. ALTERNATIVE REFERENCE: 100191943-002 (DOCUMENT CIRCULATED) Decision: No objections.	
c.	SCOTTISH FORESTRY – ACHORMLARIE (DOCUMENT CIRCULATED) FUNDING APPLICATIONS Decision: No objections.	
d.	ADDITIONAL: 20/01707/RCC. HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT BISHOPFIELD HOUSING LAND ELIZABETH CRESCENT DORNOCH (DOCUMENT NOT CIRCULATED IN TIME FOR MEETING – RAISED BY JB). JB stated that there was roughly 6 weeks where it was open to comment on – so it was something to discuss at the meeting following the AGM as the road access is of interest. Decision: To review over the above time frame.	
6.	FUNDING APPLICATIONS	
a.	DACIC APPLICATION FOR £39,750 TO COMPLETE DORNOCH SOUTH PURCHASE (DOCUMENT CIRCULATED) PM welcomed Joan Bishop to the meeting to discuss the document circulated with the agenda. DACIC had been working with the Highland Council (HC) and they had applied to the Rural Tourism Infrastructure on DACICs behalf for around £200,000 with an intervention rate of 70% leaving £89,760 that they had to obtain. They had put in a bid to the Beatrice Fund for £50,000 which left the remaining £39,750 being asked for from the Dornoch Common Good Fund (DCGF). The funding would not be drawn until or unless both the other bids were confirmed. PM and JMc left the meeting and GR took the Chair for the discussions and vote. DM expressed concern about the potential impact of contamination on the Dornoch South site. Joan Bishop explained that other funding had been secured to perform the necessary site investigation work and that the development would only proceed if the survey showed there was no contamination requiring expensive remediation work. Following further discussions on potential time scales, it was unanimously agreed to support the application. Decision: Application unanimously agreed with PM omitted from the vote due to being a DACIC board member.	

<p>b.</p>	<p>APPLICATION TO BEINN THARSUINN FUND BY HIGHLAND & ISLAND BLOOD BIKES (DOCUMENT CIRCULATED)</p> <p>An application for £10,000 from the Alness Blood Bikers had been circulated to members on behalf of PT, the Beinn Tharsuinn fund manager.</p> <p>PM noted that DACC controlled only 2.49% of the fund and he was aware that other communities with much higher shares had already refused the application. It was also noted that the former DACC Chair had previously advised the applicant to seek alternative sources such as governmental support. PM & JMc to help them follow this up.</p> <p>Following a short discussion, the application was unanimously refused by the members.</p> <p>Decision: Unanimously refused</p>	<p>PM & JMc</p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>ITEMS FOR NOTING & DISCUSSION COVID 19</p> <p>PM highlighted the good reputation of the food bank, the volunteers and YR raising approximately £12,000 for the bags for the children (activity packs) which sets Dornoch ahead of other communities – as noted in the Northern Times. PM continued that this was very much YR’s project [REDACTED].</p> <p>[REDACTED]. PM stated that the money raised was specifically for the DACC and proposed that the DACC authorise YR to spend the money as she has and continues to see fit. This must be authorised by the signatories (MH & PM).</p> <p>Decision: Authorised Yvonne Ross to continue to use the money specifically raised for Covid-19 charitable purposes as she has been up until now, subject as always, to authorisation by two DACC authorised signatories.</p>	
<p>8.</p>	<p>PROTOCOL FOR DACC MEMBERS COMMUNICATIONS WITH PRESS INCLUDING REVIEW OF RECENT COMMUNICATIONS RE: NEGOTIATIONS WITH RDGC; TREES AT MEDICAL CENTRE & BUSSED LABOUR FOR WEEDING CHRISTMAS TREE PLANTATION</p> <p>PM suggested that this matter be discussed next meeting as he was not convinced that the DACC have the correct protocol in place.</p> <p>Decision: Unanimously agreed to postpone the discussion to a later date when more information and research had been done with the aid of PT.</p>	
<p>9.</p>	<p>EARLS CROSS AND STATION ROAD WOODLAND</p> <p>Unfortunately, technical problems prevented Gavin Gilbey from attending the meeting.</p>	

	Outcome: Topic postponed until next meeting when both Norman Ross & Gavin Gilbey are present.	
10.	<p>INDUSTRIAL UNITS (COMMUNICATION CIRCULATED – RAISED BY DM)</p> <p>DM stated that although the building of houses in Dornoch was great, there was a severe lack of industrial units for businesses. DM & AD had both spoken to Jim Campbell (electrician) who had grave concerns about the lack of industrial units and inability to rent privately owned business spaces which were too expensive and required large amounts of refurbishment to make them fit for purpose. DM proposed that the DACC look at getting industrial units up and running again in an area in Dornoch – Jim Campbell did raise the possibility of somewhere on the Glebe field. PM stated that DM and AD were the best placed to investigate this matter further and it was agreed that they should come up a proposal and the DACC would review it.</p> <p>Action Point: DM & AD will research further to come up with a proposal</p>	DM & AD
11.	<p>CORRESPONDENCE</p> <p>LR stated that the police report would be circulated but the main item was the report of the RDGC fires. LR is to circulate this document. The second main correspondence was a gentleman wishing to know if there was a Sutherland Day and if not, was there a particular day to fly the flag? GR stated that Dornoch had its own flag and he was welcome to raise it whenever he wished. PM asked if GR would like to get in contact with him and LR agreed to pass on the details. On a general note, PM restated that LR was to deal with correspondence unless it was directed at an individual and would only circulate important material.</p> <p>Action Point – LR: Circulate Police Report & put GR in contact with the gentleman wishing to know about Sutherland Day.</p>	LR
12.	<p>TREASURERS REPORT (DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED)</p> <p>PM made the following comments on the documents circulated: The Dornoch Common Good Fund (DCGF)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DCGF had a balance well over £300,000. • Currently £200,000 was informally reserved (ring-fenced) by the DACC although there was nothing officially confirmed in this regard by the HC. £100,000 had been reserved for a sports barn and another £100,000 for a new community hall. • The DCGF's annual income was now over £45,000. This excluded income from the agreement recently negotiated in principle with the Royal Dornoch Golf Club (RDGC). • The recent agreement in principle with RDGC was that they would pay the DCGF £25,000 per annum + £2 per visitor round, 	

the latter with a minimum of £10,000 per annum guaranteed for 10 years. Thereafter, it would be roughly the same amount assuming the level of visitors stays the same as the last few years.

- If this agreement with RDGC were to be confirmed the DCGF's income would rise to over £90,000 per annum.
- On the strength of this significant increase in DCGF income, PM believed the DCGF had a responsibility to use the money for the benefit of the town.
- On top of this, he believed the DCGF should not be reserving funds for the sports barn and community hall any longer; there was not an immediate prospect of a sports barn or a community hall, and if and when this were to change, there was a reasonable probability that the DCGF would have enough income to fund both these projects.
- Thus, the DCGF needed to move on projects such as Dornoch South and the public toilets. PM stated that he would like PT's input on this matter.
- PT stated that the annual income from rents was £45,610 now and this was not likely to increase unless the DCGF acquires more leases. The RDGC money had not been received yet, due to negotiations being ongoing. Some rents had not been collected yet, although they would be soon. The caravan park rent would be collected in line with HC policy which meant it might not be received immediately – due to the coronavirus pandemic – but no discounts were to be given, although staged payments (payment holidays) were to be allowed.
- PT continued that the ring-fencing of funds had traditionally been practised by the DACC but would probably not be enforced by the HC. PT also advised that although there was no formal ring-fencing, the townspeople might expect it as there had been a long history of the money being saved up for a sports barn and community hall.
- For the benefit of those who are slightly newer to the DACC, PT explained that in November he drafted the DCGF budget for presentation to the County Committee in February. The budget was set every year and in the current budget £25,000 was available for community projects and roughly £2,000 to cover HC's costs.
- PT also noted that, depending on amounts, decisions about the use of DCGF monies – depending on the type – were dealt with by different committees. In the case of the previously discussed DACIC bid, it would be decided by the Sutherland County Committee as the amount was over £10,000.

DM asked PT about the caravan site rent and what would happen if the HC did not get support which would allow the caravan park to be covered. There was a discussion regarding this, and PT stated that

	<p>the HC had its policy and the policy was what was being followed. It might change in the future as the Covid-19 situation changed but currently, that was what was happening and there would be no deviation from this.</p> <p>DACC's own funds</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> PM explained that the accounts showed there was £7,566.53 in the bank and £4,061.02 of that was DACC's own money while majority of the remaining monies were for Covid-19 which would be left for YR to use for its intended purpose - as agreed above. PM stated that approval of the official end-March 2020 accounts was required; these had been signed off by himself, YR (whilst still chair) and Marcus Maclver, the auditor. <p>Decision: The DACC accounts for year ended 31st March 2020 were approved unanimously.</p>	
13.	MUNICIPAL PROJECTS UPDATE	
	<p>JB summarised the circulated paper and asked for questions. DM stated he would like to be part of the committee proposed in the paper but agreed more than three would not be required. DM also stated it would be nice to have it sorted by Spring 2021. JM supported the project and thought it long overdue. JB asked PT if there were any issues regarding using DCGF monies. PT explained that if the board were looking to spend £30-£40k it would need tenders put in place. DM said yes that was just one quote he had got, and any quotes would be based on timescale as well as cost. He said it would be great to use local trades people, but it would be nice to have a quick turnaround.</p> <p>Decisions – The following was unanimously agreed: DACC will take this forward as a key project A subcommittee of JM, JB and DM will initially progress this project. Wait before deciding whether to ring-fence any amounts necessary for the project</p>	JM, JB & DM
14.	DEFIBRILATOR The board congratulated MH on the matter of the defibrillator which was to be installed outside Mitchell's Chemist and MH confirmed that Gareth (Dixon) had ordered everything.	
15.	PREPERATIONS FOR AGM PT clarified that the AGM does have to happen, although it does not have to be done by the end of June and it can be done via conference call as this would be entirely appropriate. PM proposed that the DACC hold the AGM at the originally scheduled date (June 17 th , 2020) and that it should be held via conference call and invite members of the public (who must give notice) to attend. It was agreed to advertise the AGM using website, Northern Times, Facebook, and public spaces which are open. PT confirmed that at least 3 new office bearers would need to be nominated and	

	seconded at the meeting and if there were no other candidates and no objections, they would be elected. JMc (in his official Councillor capacity) would ask for the nominations of the Chair, and if approved, the Chair would take over and appoint the remaining bearers. One final item that will be required for the AGM is the Chair's report which PM hopes YR will agree to write.	
16.	AOCB	
a.	<p>ADDED TO THE AGENDA LATE: DACC CONSTITUTION: CONSTITUTION WAS READ AND AN AMENDMENT DISGUST (SIC*) – THIS WAS CONSEQUENTLY REPORTED TO PHIL TOMALIN AFTER THE MEETING WHO AUTHORISED THE AMENDMENT AND THIS CAN BE FORMALLY APPROVED AT NEXT MEETING.</p> <p>Decision: It was unanimously agreed to approve the new Highland Council template constitution for all Community Councils subject to removing the words 'by signature' in Clause 14.1.</p>	
b.	AOCB TO BOARD	
	<p>JM asked JMc about the area between the wooden bridge down Shore Road and the Medical Centre access where there is the stone bridge. JM stated there was quite a big gap between the railing and the wall of the bridge, and that it was quite dangerous. JMc said he would investigate. PM noted that Roads and Pathways should be added back to the agenda on a bimonthly basis – LR to do this.</p> <p>Action Point – JMc: To investigate the gap between railing and bridge on Shore Road.</p>	<p>JMc - Bridge</p> <p>LR - Agenda</p>
	<p>AD asked if it was possible to use the council chambers with social distancing for DACC meetings. This was still not allowed due to the current governmental advice. PM stated that DACC would plan for a conference call, but as soon as the chance was available the DACC should meet in the council chambers and adhere to social distancing and governmental advice.</p>	
	<p>DB asked about the new tree at Kennedy Avenue as it had snapped. This was an important tree and should be looked at and replanted. PM stated that it should be the responsibility of whoever planted the tree last, but DB says this was not possible. Thus, the decision was that the DACC would buy a new tree and invite YR to plant it. This will be discussed at the next meeting.</p> <p>Action Point: New Tree at Kennedy Avenue to be discussed at the next meeting</p>	
	<p>MH had been approached by a customer who had two points: Firstly, where she normally walked her dog - near the station - there used to be a wooden post that she could use for support and that has now been pulled out. The post was still there, but it needed to be put back in. DM asked if it was rotten and MH stated she did not know. MH got the impression that it was just a case of putting the post back in and DM said he would do this.</p> <p>Secondly, her customer was fed up with black dog poo bags being thrown into bushes. PM suggested that the only practical solution would be to put more signs up trying to stop this behaviour.</p> <p>Action Point – DM: Fix the post.</p> <p>Action Point – Get more signs for the dog fouling issue</p>	<p>Post: DM</p> <p>Signs: JMc</p>

	<p>PM proposed that members should think of co-opting another DACC member as numbers had dropped to 8. The rules on co-option were that a co-opted member would need a two thirds majority of DACC votes; if elected the co-opted member would have full voting rights. The ideal candidate would be young and vibrant – potentially from a crofting background and/or from Embo.</p> <p>Action Point - All: To think of candidates for co-option.</p>	ALL
	<p>JM stated that there was a vehicle blocking the square and stated that it was not the best place to park these things. DM stated that if this was raised, then the issue with the garage should be raised as well and as it was currently quieter with less tourists around, then it could be allowed as it was being used for refurbishment of the SA (Coach House). Board agreed and no action would be taken.</p> <p>Decision – No action to be taken.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">MEETING CLOSED AT: 20:58</p> <p>With no further business to discuss, the acting-chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting. Meeting closed at the above time and the date of next meeting is stated below.</p>	
	<p style="text-align: center;">DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 17TH JUNE 2020 AT 7:30PM.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AGM TO BE HELD AT 7PM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HELD VIA CONFERENCE CALL.</p>	