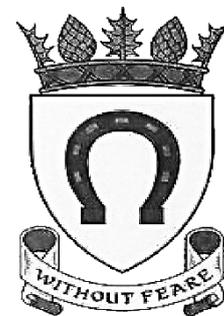


**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF  
DORNOCH AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (DACC)  
HELD ON MONDAY 16TH SEPTEMBER, 7PM  
VIA ONLINE CONFERENCE CALL**



**PRESENT**

Patrick Murray – Chair - PM  
Graeme Ross – Vice Chair - GR  
Jerry Bishop – Treasurer – JB  
Davie MacBeath – DM  
Jimmy Melville - JM

**IN ATTENDANCE**

Lou Rollason – Minutes – LR  
Jim McGillivray – JMc

**APOLOGIES**

Lesley Strang – LS

**VISITORS**

Gillian Pearson – Highland Council  
Phil Tomalin – Ward Manager

**PRELIMINARIES**

**FOREWORD FROM CHAIR**

At the start of the normal business meeting, after the two visitors had departed, PM noted that this week three of the members Ann Durrand, Cath Macangus and Maggie Hope had resigned because the demands of work and family mean they no longer have the time to devote to Dornoch Area Community Council. PM commented 'This is a huge blow to us. All three members are intimately connected with the fabric of Dornoch, and Ann and Cath have lived here all their lives. It is a huge loss to the Community Council that they have decided to resign and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for all they have done for Dornoch during their terms of service.'

<b>1.</b>	<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b> Apologies were received from Lesley Strang.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>DECLARATION OF INTEREST</b> None were declared.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>ADOPTION &amp; ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (19/8/20)</b> GR proposed and the meeting agreed to eliminate the words '& GR stated that the industrial units by the railway were wooden' in item 4b to be deleted because this was just a passing comment and not sufficiently relevant to the discussion to be minuted. The minutes were then proposed by DM as a true account of the meeting and seconded by JB.  <b>ITEMS TO BE AMENDED.</b>	<b>LR</b>
<b>4.</b>	<b>MATTERS ARISING (NOT OTHERWISE COVERED IN AGENDA)</b>	
<b>a.</b>		
<b>b.</b>	<b>Bishopfield</b> – Work is out to tender & should include an improvement to the junction.  <b>IN PROGRESS</b>	<b>JMc</b>
<b>c.</b>	<b>Industrial Units</b> – Still with HIE.  <b>IN PROGRESS</b>	<b>JMc</b>
<b>d.</b>	<b>Railing</b> – In progress	<b>JMc &amp; JM</b>

	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	
e.	<b>Meeting with Phil Tomalin</b> – Discussed (see point 6).	
	<b>FINISHED</b>	
f.	<b>DORNOCH COMMUNITY AWARD</b> Article was printed in the NT & Michael Banks was happy with his award.	
	<b>FINISHED</b>	
g.	<b>SEAFRONT CAFÉ/VAN</b> This is progressing. An issue arose regarding the cost for approval which is the same for a one-year lease as for a ten-year lease and it is hoped that this can resolved by having a ten-year-lease with a one-year break clause.	<b>PM</b>
	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	
h.	<b>EARLS CROSS AND STATION ROAD WOODLAND</b> DACC were offered the land by Sutherland Estates (SE) for £35,000. PM stated there were no interested parties and that the Woodland Trust advised that the risk of a tree falling on the road or on a nearby house would be substantial and to address this it is likely that several trees would require removal with a cost of between £10,000 and £20,000 in the first year of ownership. If unmaintained the area would revert to a general woodland rather than the specialist beech woodland that it is today, and paths and signage would deteriorate so it would be good if someone formed a group to seek permission from SE to maintain the woodland. DM volunteered to try to do this. GR stated there was no heavy work required.	<b>DM</b>
	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	
i.	<b>DORNOCH HOTEL</b> Discussions regarding the grounds being overrun. It is private land; therefore nothing could be done by DACC.	
<b>PRESENTATIONS BY VISITORS</b>		
5.	<b>PLANNING PROCEDURES: GILLIAN PEARSON (GP)</b> PM welcomed Gillian Pearson (GP) and asked how involved DACC should be for local planning applications in the IV25 postcode. Her response was as involved/uninvolved as they wish to be. GP stated that consultations on larger builds were sent via e-mail & members could receive them. PM queried possible DACC site visits for multiple/retail planning. GP stated this was not required, but comments were always accepted. PM asked if this was how it was done previously GR agreed that it was. GR reiterated that DACC did not normally make comments on private residences. GP continued that receiving notice from DACC that an application had received no comments was useful. Regarding the ESRA building (see April 2020 minutes) the issue was that the letter of objection did not include the word, 'object' and thus was treated as a general comment. PM noted that a minimum number of objecting individuals was required to sustain a successful objection and questioned if objections from a Community Council count as just one objection. GP stated that irrespective of how many objections there are privately, if a community council objects, then it goes to	

	<p>the committee whereas 8 objections from different households were needed for it to be brought to the committee.</p> <p>PM questioned how the CC could follow up to ensure that changes were not made to the plans after it had approved them. He cited the example of the Storage Building for the County Show which is in a different place from that on the plans approved by the CC. GP stated this should have been picked up by the planning department.</p> <p>JB asked how often plans were approved without full dimensions being cited. GP stated that full dimensions were normally required although they were not in the case of the Storage Building.</p> <p>GP stated that the pre-application stage is usually confidential. Larger scale developers must have one consultation event and submit a proposal for public scrutiny.</p> <p>The final stage is the planning application stage where comments would be welcome from the public.</p> <p>GR asked if GP had any comments about the Dornoch Conservation Area. GR stated that if there were a concern for the conservation area, DACC were welcome to comment.</p> <p>JB asked about the new screening application for the quarry, as the original planning licence expired 2.5 years ago. and if this was considered a continuation and not a new application. GP responded that it may have been worded incorrectly but she assured DACC that it referred to the previous excavation site and is a new application. JB asked if the original planning conditions would be adhered to, for example ensuring the ground is restored after mineral extractions.</p> <p>GP appreciated that this was something that has been an issue in the past, and that this scenario would not happen again. GP was looking for phased restoration which would be highlighted in the screening process.</p> <p>JB asked if he could contact a complainant and outline the situation as above. GP agreed.</p> <p>GP then drew attention to the development plan compiled by the planning policy for Caithness &amp; Sutherland and reviewed every 5 years. They have a mailing list which may be worth signing up for which shows planned allocated sites (like Elizabeth Crescent site). Allocated sites normally go forward to formal planning proposals.</p>	
<p>6.</p>	<p><b>PUBLIC TOILETS &amp; BANK STEPS UPDATE: PHIL TOMLIN (PT)</b></p> <p>PT stated three options exist for the toilets (e-mailed prior to meeting):</p> <p><u>1 Highland Council (HC) refurbishes the toilets under its capital programme.</u>  <i>This is extremely unlikely in the foreseeable future because there is currently no capital available for toilet refurbishment, and secondly Dornoch toilets are unlikely to be at the top of the list if/when if when capital does become available.</i></p> <p><u>2. The community refurbishes the toilets</u>  <i>Under this option a community organisation would apply for Common Good funding and use this to refurbish the toilets. Ownership of the toilets would also need to be transferred to the community org. Although this gives control over the refurbishment project to the community, it also means the community org. taking on the long term running and maintenance of the toilets. The community org. would however get the proceeds from the toilet charges to cover those costs. Apart from the ongoing responsibility of running the toilets, a major hurdle is which community organisation would take ownership of the toilets. There are no likely candidates at the moment, and we also still need to complete/ formalise the transfer of the beach toilets. PT understands from the minute of the Aug meeting that the CC does not favour this option, however PM has been making preliminary approaches to potential contractors to benchmark against the Council costs, so it does remain as a potential Plan B.</i></p>	

### 3 The (Highland) Council refurbishes the toilets

*The Council retains the toilets and organises the refurbishment using Dornoch Common Good Funds. I understand that this is the CC's preferred option. Ward 4 Highland Council Members were supportive in principle at 17 Aug Ward Business Meeting. I have checked and if costs >£10K (I think this is likely) the final decision will need to be made by Sutherland County Committee – next meeting is 5 Nov.*

*The process will include the following:*

- *Project would be Highland Council (HC) led and follow usual HC procurement and capital project management procedures. There would be a Project Management charge to the CG*
- *There are concerns about costs to the CG fund, so CC / HC Members need to be given opportunity to comment on and agree from different options - suggestion is 3 options: -*
  1. *minimum/ essential improvements*
  2. *full refurbishment*
  3. *somewhere in between 1 and 2 delivering significant improvement but short of full refurb to control costs*
- *If HC Members or CC (with local Members' backing) did not want project to go ahead, then design costs may still be charged to CG to cover the work in drawing up the 3 options. I have asked for an indication of the likely design costs.*
- *From HC perspective the following are important issues / conditions*
  - *All 3 proposals will include CCTV to address vandalism (there has been repeated kicking of the Gents door to gain access)*
  - *All 3 specs will use standard fixtures and fittings to enable use of standard stock (e.g. toilet rolls) and repairs / replacements from stores*
  - *All 3 specs will ensure operational requirements/ procedures can be followed*
  - *The specs will include solar panels (if compatible and reasonably priced) to reduce running costs and carbon footprint*
  - *After the project has been completed, the PCs will continue to operate as at present with regard to charging, opening hours and cleaning regime etc.*
  - *The Council has no capital to contribute to the project - it will need to be entirely funded from the common good fund (hence the 3 options approach).*

PT added that option 3 was agreed in principle with HC on 17<sup>th</sup> of August and met with them on Monday (14<sup>th</sup> September 2020) and in principle, DACC has their support.

DM questioned why it seemed that the Dornoch toilets were so far down the priority list & found it quite distasteful that DACC would fund the project that the HC take the revenue for. PT stated that the revenue was to cover the running costs & DM asked why it couldn't be 50%/50. PT stated that there was no money to fund the 50%.

PM asked that if surplus income could be used by DACC – PT said no. PM stated the situation was clearly unsatisfactory with regard to the monetary aspect.

PM asked for a vote. PT stated that there was still an opportunity for DACC to change its mind later in the process.

JM questioned why DACC could not use the estimated costs that DM came up with previously – PM stated that that this was still an option.

	<p>JB noted that finding someone to take over the toilets had proved difficult. With PT looking at council involvement, PM looking at the other pricing options, option 3 was voted on.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PM REQUESTED VOTES AT THIS STAGE (ON OPTION 3): 1 OBJECTION FROM DM – REMAINDER HAVE NO OBJECTIONS AT PRESENT.</b></p> <p>PM asked PT for an update on the Bank Steps. They were currently shut as works were continuing and should be finished by the next meeting. PM asked if they could be opened before completion? PT stated “no”.</p> <p>JB asked PT about recent resignations, and training – PT agreed to investigate this.</p> <p>JB asked about an update on the Common Good Fund and PT said this would be ready in November.</p>	
<b>ITEMS FOR DECISION</b>		
<b>7.</b>	<b>PLANNING &amp; LICENCING APPLICATIONS</b>	
a.	<p><b>20/03301/SCRE   REQUEST FOR SCREENING OPINION: CONTINUATION OF SAND AND GRAVEL QUARRY   PITGRUDY FARMHOUSE DORNOCH IV25 3HY</b></p> <p>As it was a screening application, there was no opportunity for DACC (or anyone else for that matter) to comment.</p>	
b.	<p><b>20/02820/SCRE   DEVELOPMENT OF AN 18-HOLE CHAMPIONSHIP LINKS GOLF COURSE, PAR 3 COURSE AND PRACTICE AREA   LAND 1700M NW OF EMBO COMMUNITY CENTRE SCHOOL STREET EMBO</b></p> <p>As it was a screening application, there was no opportunity for DACC (or anyone else for that matter) to comment.</p>	
<b>8.</b>	<p><b>GOLSPIE COMMUNITY COUNCIL</b></p> <p>The invitation to support the draft letter from Golspie, Brora and Helmsdale Councils accepted .</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUPPORTED</b></p> <p>GR asked if this would be an opportunity for the Community Councils to come together for an informal discussion once or twice a year looking at just the surrounding councils – PM will build this into the above.</p> <p><b>Addendum: 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2020.</b> <i>GR asked if this would be an opportunity for the Community Council Chairs to come together virtually, for an informal discussion once or twice a year looking at just the surrounding councils – PM will build this into the above.</i></p>	<b>PM/LR</b>

<b>ITEMS FOR NOTING &amp; DISCUSSION</b>		
<b>PROGRESS REPORTS &amp; UPDATES</b>		
<b>9.</b>		
<b>a.</b>	<b>COVID-19</b>	
	<b>NO COMMENTS RECEIVED</b>	
<b>b.</b>	<b>DORNOCH SKIP</b>	
	<p>SEPA had now officially approved the site. It was a temporary recognition, but HC stated that there was no threat of it being withdrawn.</p> <p>There was one skip driver, two supervisors and two skips - one for general waste &amp; one for garden waste.</p> <p>The feedback received had been positive.</p> <p>In the first two weeks there were 90+ cars disposing of their waste. Week three had 70+. HC wanted to see when the demand plateaus, and if a new recycling skip will be required.</p> <p>JB added that there was a meeting with Alan McKinnie (head of waste services) and there had been increased use of the garden waste service.</p> <p>GR stated he had heard feedback regarding the depositing of electrical waste. JB reiterated that the last site was unregulated and SEPA refused to allow waste to touch the ground – eg: washing machines etc.</p> <p>JB alluded to an area which perhaps could be used for an expanded recycling service including electrical waste for future consideration which was received positively by Alan McKinnie.</p> <p><b>DISCUSSION TO BE HELD ON 13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER</b></p>	<b>PM, JB &amp; JMc</b>
<b>c.</b>	<b>DORNOCH TRUST</b>	
	<b>NOT DISCUSSED</b>	
<b>d.</b>	<b>BEACH DEVELOPMENT</b>	
	<b>DISCUSSED IN POINT 4A</b>	
<b>e.</b>	<b>DORNOCH PLANNING SEMINAR</b>	
	To contact HIE.	<b>PM &amp; JB</b>
	<b>IN PROGRESS</b>	
<b>f.</b>	<b>EARLS CROSS AND STATION ROAD WOODLAND</b>	
	<b>DISCUSSED IN POINT 4H</b>	
<b>10.</b>	<b>DORNOCH BURN CLEAN</b>	
	A plan was in place for HC to ask the community for Common Good Funds to clear the burn from Station Road to the end of the Caravan Site – with mechanical equipment. Planned for October.	
<b>11.</b>	<b>TIMBER DIVIDERS AT THE BEACH CAR PARK</b>	
	DM stated that these were causing concerns as they were too high and could cause injury.	

	<p>JMc stated that as they were three meters apart there should be no issue. JB wished to voice his concerns over works already done, and then changed, and urged that no further work be done until after the planning seminar and once definitive plans were in place. He also stated that “own risk” signage would be beneficial.</p> <p>DM stated that flooding, especially in winter could be a problem and that soakaways were needed.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>ON HOLD UNTIL PLANNING SEMINAR TO ASSESS OPTIONS</b></p>	
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>LITTER</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NOT TO DISCUSS UNTIL POST COVID-19</b></p>	
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>ABILITY NET PROPOSAL</b></p> <p>PM stated that although a worthy cause, access to the Common Good Funds must be made by the normal application form and benefit IV25 residents. PM and/or LR to send details on this.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>DETAILS TO BE SENT</b></p>	<b>PM/LR</b>
<b>14.</b>	<p><b>CORRESPONDENCE INCLUDING ANY SUBMISSION FROM POLICE</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>N/A FROM POLICE THIS MONTH.</b></p>	
<b>a.</b>	<p><b>COACH PARK &amp; MOTORHOME PARKING</b></p> <p>PM to send a letter of support unless there were any objections. No objections were forthcoming.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IN SUPPORT</b></p>	<b>PM</b>
<b>b.</b>	<p><b>AN E-MAIL WAS RECEIVED TO ASK FOR COUNCILLORS’ SUPPORT FOR A “NO THROUGH ROAD” SIGN ON CHURCH STREET BETWEEN NO. 8 AND KERRISDALE.</b></p> <p>JMc will ask for the correct signage to be erected, a ‘No Through Road’ sign as opposed to the original ‘No Entry’ sign which has rusted away. DM to contact James Irwin for temporary measures.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IN PROGRESS</b></p>	<b>JMc</b>
<b>c.</b>	<p><b>DAVID HILL</b></p> <p>Has been responded to &amp; his points were acknowledged. It was agreed JB would continue his correspondence with him as discussed with GP.</p>	<b>JB</b>
<b>15.</b>	<p><b>ROADS AND PATHWAYS</b></p> <p><b>WHITE LINES</b> JMc has raised this. DM asked for a time scale &amp; JMc stated it depended on various conditions and would try and find out.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IN PROGRESS</b></p> <p><b>20MPH SIGNAGE</b> GR asked JMc if anything was being done about the 20mph limit and JMc was awaiting a response.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>IN PROGRESS</b></p>	<p><b>JMc</b></p> <p><b>JB &amp; PM</b></p>

	<p>Shore Road: Discussed with HC who stated it is a private road belonging to Scottish Water. JM then asked that DACC offer a contribution for the potholes to be filled. PM to ask Chris Holmes for copies of all leases.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>TO ASK SCOTTISH WATER IF IT CAN BE REPAIRED</b></p>	
16.	<p><b>TREASURER'S REPORT (JB)</b></p> <p>JB circulated an update on finance. A small income from beach toilets was recorded. The defibrillator was now operational outside the chemist and Gareth Dixon was not looking for a contribution, so the £400 reserve has been put into the general fund. A further £360 is reserved for the the beach group (previously BRIG) and it was agreed that this would be paid out this month. JB continued that there remains approximately £300,000 in the Common Good Fund.</p>	
17.	<p><b>MUNICIPAL PROJECTS UPDATE (JB)</b></p> <p>JB gave an overview. Ongoing projects included Cycle trail progressing – to add to the agenda for next meeting to discuss properly. The rest of the list was on track.</p> <p><b>Dornoch Hotel</b> Discussed above in point 4i <b>Finished</b></p> <p><b>Cemetery Gates</b> JM stated that the gates were rusty &amp; JMc would check to see if HC have any responsibility for this. If not, JB would look elsewhere. <b>In Progress</b></p> <p><b>Broken Seat at the memorial</b> Billy May &amp; JB working on this. <b>In Progress</b></p> <p><b>Signs into Dornoch</b> DM stated that the original plan was to speak to Dave Mahoney and get a cost. DM to action this. <b>In Progress</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>LR</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>JMc &amp; JB</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>JB</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>DM</b></p>
18.	<p><b>AOCB</b></p> <p>GR: Questioned if there can be a letter of thanks for the defibrillator costs. PM to action. <b>In Progress</b></p> <p>DM: Flying Club, the memorial to their president needed repainting. DM also asked about the shed and who is to declutter it, as it was becoming an eyesore. <b>In Progress</b></p>	<p style="text-align: right;"><b>PM</b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>DM &amp; PM</b></p>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MEETING CLOSED AT: 21:18</b></p> <p>With no further business to discuss, the Chair thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at the above time and the date of next meeting is stated below.</p>	

	<b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2020 AT 7PM IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBERS, DORNOCH (IF ALLOWED).</b>	