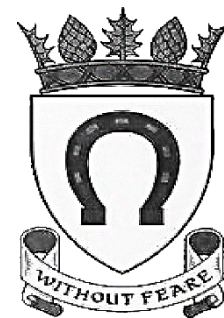


**MINUTES OF A GENERAL MEETING OF
DORNOCH AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (DACC)
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17TH MAY 2023
IN PERSON AT DORNOCH HUB & VIA ZOOM**



PRESENT

Patrick Murray – PM
Jerry Bishop – JB (videophone till 20:30)
Genevieve Duhigg – GD (till 20:05)
Jimmy Melville – JM
David MacBeath – DM
Graeme Ross – GR (Zoom)
Matthew Gallon – MG
Finlay Gibson – FG

IN ATTENDANCE

Malcolm Hayes – MH (Dornoch Model Flying Club for Item 10)
Jim McGillivray – Cllr – JMc (except for Item 6(a))
Caroline McMorrان (Northern Times)

**PLEASE USE THE LINKS IN THE HEADINGS (WHERE APPLICABLE) TO ACCESS CORRESPONDING DOCUMENTATION.
FULL DOCUMENTATION IS AVAILABLE [here](#)**

1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE LS	
2.	DECLARATION OF INTEREST JMc declared an interest in Item 6(a) and would withdraw from the room when this was discussed.	
3.	ADOPTION & ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES OF LAST MEETING (19/04/23) The minutes of the last meeting here were proposed by GD as an accurate account of the meeting, and seconded by DM. The meeting then moved to address Item 6(a), Item 17, an extra item on BID Update, Item10, an extra item on a Licensing application, then Item 9, before resuming the ordinary schedule at Item 6(b).	
4.	MATTERS ARISING (NOT OTHERWISE COVERED IN AGENDA – (NUMBERS RELATE TO THE LAST MEETING POINT)	
a.	6(b) 23/01099/FUL. The Planning Officer responded to indicate that it was not a reasonable condition to insist that the corner be released for improvement and that this should have been done prior to previous developments in the Elizabeth Crescent area. JMc stated that he was pursuing a Memorandum of Understanding between the developer and the Council as a potential way forward.	JMC
b.	20(a) Noticeboard – this is work in progress.	JM
5.	VISITORS (None)	

	ITEMS FOR DECISION	
6.	PLANNING & LICENSING APPLICATIONS	
	here	
a.	<p>23/00580/FUL Councillor Jim McGillivray cited a conflict of interest and exited the room for the vote on the Planning application for Coul links. JB proposed and PM seconded a motion calling for DACC to support the development. GD proposed and GR seconded an amendment calling for DACC not to comment. The Chair called for votes on the amendment; GD and GR voted in favour of the amendment. The Chair called for votes on the motion which was supported by PM, JB, JM and DM. Both the motion and the proposed amendment are included in full as an appendix to these minutes.</p>	
b.	23/01617/FUL, 23/01990/FUL, 23/01882/FUL, 23/01960/PNO, 23/02029/PNO, 23/01977/FUL all no comment.	
c.	<p>23/01550/FUL & 23/01543/LBC (Ambassador House) After extended discussion, it was agreed that the Chair undertake the following correspondence:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A letter to Global Energy noting that there had been complaints that Ambassador House had become a venue for under-age drinking and other anti-social activities, and that this not only resulted in litter in the nearby woodland including beer/wine bottles/general trash as well as occasional disturbance to the neighbours, but also possible danger to the under-age users of the venue, because of the poor state of repair of the building. Would Global Energy please let DACC know what their plans are to address this situation? 2. A letter to Highland Council Planning noting that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The development plans for Ambassador House have not been actioned for several years, due mainly to access problems particularly for vehicles needed for any construction work, and b. Ambassador House itself used to be an asset to the town of Dornoch and is a listed building, but that it has become an ugly mar on the landscape used by groups of youngsters as a venue for under-age drinking and other anti-social activities, and that Highland Council should meet both Global Energy and local residents at the site to see if a resolution can be found. 	PM
7.	FUNDING APPLICATIONS (none)	
8.	<p>Provost's Robes and Chain: Historylinks Loan Arrangement here PM introduced this item by asking if GR was content to allow Historylinks to insure these items. GR was adamant that the items were 100% the property of the Community Council and that DACC should insure them. JM commented that in his experience, the owner insures. JB stated that Historylinks were not the actual owners of much of its display, and that the Charter in particular had not been properly stored for a number of years. He added that Historylinks had increased its insurance premium by £100 to cover these items and awaited further instruction. The Chain had been valued professionally and insured in its own right for £50,000.</p>	PM

	<p>PM referred to the letter from the Ward Manager confirming DACC's ownership of these item and asked that JB provide an official letter from Historylinks also acknowledging this ownership, these to be displayed on the DACC website.</p> <p>Since there was no unanimity of agreement over the terms of the loan arrangement, the matter was deferred to the June meeting.</p>	
9.	<p>Dornoch Trees here and here The proposal from JB was discussed and adopted as policy by the Community Council. GR made a supplementary point about screening trees around the boundary of the Springfield development, and this was noted.</p>	
10.	<p>Dornoch Airfield PM referred to the recent decision by the Council Economy & Infrastructure Committee here for Highland Council to divest itself of the airfields for which it has legacy responsibility. MH stated that the Council had never been good at running the airfield, that the Highland Strut did not use the facility as much now, and that it could be a major asset if operated properly.</p> <p>After contributions from GD and JB, PM undertook to write to the Highland Council Economy & Infrastructure Committee noting that:</p> <p>(a) The Highland Council wishes to stop managing the Dornoch Airfield. (b) The Airfield is a valuable asset of the Dornoch Common Good which the Highland Council has a duty to manage to the best of its ability. (c) DACC supports the Highland Council's suggestion that on behalf of the Dornoch Common Good it may seek bids for a lease of the airfield to parties that it believes may have interest in managing it, either on a commercial or on a voluntary basis.</p>	PM
(extra)	<p>Hotel Licensing Application PM referred to an application by the Castle Hotel to extend its licensed hours to 1:00am 6 days a week and was inclined to object to this. DM stated that most other premises were open for these hours with no significant problems. GR supported this from his own experience of living for a great many years beside the Eagle. PM agreed that no action be taken.</p>	
ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION		
11.	<p>FINANCE UPDATE here The Treasurer's report was taken as read</p>	
12.	<p>PROJECTS UPDATE</p>	
a	<p>DACC MAINTENANCE PROJECTS here JB's report was taken as read. He added that the surfacing project at the overflow car park had been priced for DACC at £8,000 but that the Ward Manager has suggested that the Highland Council commission the works with a saving of £1,300 VAT to the Common Good. The funding application for signage painting had still to be submitted.</p>	JB
b	<p>HIGHLAND COUNCIL PROJECTS JMc spoke to the attached report here. He informed the meeting that the Sutherland Capital Roads Programme had been confirmed with 195 priorities</p>	JMC

	of which 10 were definitely scheduled for action this financial year with a further 11 very likely. There was a fluid situation with a few other roads projects which would be done as funding allowed. He added that a sign to restrict extended parking at the entrance to the Caravan Park would be in place shortly.	
c	DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS here PM reported that the scheme of activity as circulated was work in progress.	PM
13.	ROADS & PATHWAYS DM asked that potholes at Earls X Road and Elizabeth Crescent be drawn to the attention of the Roads Squad. MG and FG referred to excessive rutting on roads around the Memorial. Under Pathways, DM asked for action to be taken on bushes overgrowing a path at Elizabeth Crescent.	JMC
14.	PARKING IN DORNOCH No update on progress had been received from the Council Parking Officer.	
15.	ALLSORTS here JMc updated members on the present situation. He reported that the motion from Cllr Gale and himself to reduce lets charges had not been presented as expected at the full Highland Council meeting and had been pulled with no notice at the last minute. There had been, however, several meetings with Council Officers to try to find a solution to the matter and already a 50% reduction in lets charges had been offered. ELC Officers were also working on adopting some Allsorts commitments into their 1140 hours provision. There is not as yet a solution but efforts are being made to find a satisfactory outcome.	
16.	EARLS CROSS WOOD & AMBASSADOR HOUSE Covered under Item 6(c) above.	
17.	LOCAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY GD referred to the recently issued HITRANS Case for Change Report here . She explained that this was a public consultation document looking to increase uptake of public transport, walking and cycling, so the emphasis will be very much on larger settlements and thus be weighted towards Inverness. DM bemoaned that planning for walk and cycle paths was not integrated. JB raised the issue of an unused £100K of CCF money put towards a Sutherland Transport Plan. JMc explained that this was an initiative to map all transport provision across Sutherland and try to come up with a joined-up platform of provision to meet the needs of as many county residents as possible. CC Members invited GD to make a submission on behalf of DACC to the Case for Change Consultation.	GD
(extra)	BID UPDATE GD explained that the consultation process was nearly complete with nearly 200 businesses involved. The next step is the production of the business case and only businesses with a Rateable Value can vote, with the vote scheduled for October. She acknowledged the work of the Ward Manager in pulling together a comprehensive list of the services provided by Highland Council and suggested that Dornoch community groups also provide such a catalogue.	

	DM observed that there was some disconnect with the public and that more publicity is needed. GD replied that an action for the BID would be to pull all community websites together.	
18.	AGM PREPARATION The need for some preparation was acknowledged but the item was deferred for the present.	
19.	POLICE REPORT (available on One-Drive) This was noted without further comment.	
20.	CORRESPONDENCE	
	Relevant correspondence can be found here .	
	PM referred to a proposal from Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust to establish funding for an apprentice initiative in the area if 50% funding from Common Good or Beinn Tharsuinn be identified. PM undertook to ascertain what might be possible to support this very deserving initiative.	PM
21.	AOCB	
a.	MG raised the issue of safety at the School Crossing with a tree branch at Westfield obstructing a sign. JMc to follow up with Roads Squad.	JMc
b.	After discussion about the state of some of the paths in the Burgh, MG and FG to undertake a survey to identify key issues with a view to a team of volunteers doing the necessary tidy-up work.	MG, FG
22.	COMMUNITY AWARD (IN CAMERA) The chair's proposal under this item was unanimously accepted by those present.	
23.	SUCCESSION ISSUES (IN CAMERA) LS, GD and JB were not present for this item. It was agreed that some advertising be done in advance of the CC election later in the year to attract potential future DACC members to come forward. DM suggested suitable posters in local shops, and also a Facebook campaign. This was agreed but there was no firm commitment as to when to start.	
THE MEETING CLOSED AT: 20:50		
WITH NO FURTHER BUSINESS TO DISCUSS, THE CHAIR EXTENDED HIS THANKS TO THOSE WHO ATTENDED AND CLOSED THE MEETING.		
THE DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING IS STATED BELOW.		
DATE OF NEXT MEETING – 21ST JUNE 2023		
LOCATION: HYBRID: ZOOM & THE DORNOCH HUB		

APPENDIX

The Motion and Amendment for Item 6(a) are detailed on the following pages:

Proposal for DACC May 2023 meeting - Agenda Item 6 (a)

Introduction

Dornoch Area Community Council (DACC) thanks Communities 4 Coul and Not Coul for their presentations at the recent information gathering meeting to discuss the planning application 23/00580/FUL for the '*Construction of an 18-hole golf course, practice area, access, parking, ancillary infrastructure and the change of use of existing buildings to form clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance shed and ancillary facilities*'.

DACC notes:

- the informative contents of these presentations,
- the changes to the submitted plans as compared to the previous application (17/04601/FUL),
- the large numbers of public comments to the planning application already submitted to the Highland Council ePlanning site ⁽¹⁾,
- the passionate views held and voiced by the opposing parties,
- the alarming population statistics for Sutherland as published by NHS Highland ⁽²⁾
- that DACC is not required nor competent to assess all the technical aspects of a complex planning application.
- That DACC exists solely to represent the views of its constituents (the Dornoch area community) to the Highland Council and others.

Summary

DACC concludes that the available evidence consistently shows that more than two-thirds of people resident in the DACC constituency support this application and the opportunities it will bring to the area. This is evidenced by the results of the survey conducted by Civica on behalf of the applicants (67% in favour), the number of supportive responses on ePlanning ⁽¹⁾ identified as coming from IV25 residents (as counted by both the applicant (78% in favour) and by a DACC member using different methodology (73% in favour)), and from the first-hand experience of members talking to their constituents.

Conclusion

In light of the above, DACC hereby lends its **support** to the planning application and calls on the various statutory consultees to work with all parties to find a way of ensuring this project can be delivered successfully for the benefit of not only the residents of Embo & Dornoch but also those living in the 'travel to work area' in East & Central Sutherland, whilst adequately safeguarding the natural environment.

Jerry Bishop

10 May 2023

(1) Total public comments standing at 984 at 30th April 2023

(2) [Sutherland: Partnership Profile - Public Health Intelligence \(November 2022\)](#)

Proposal for DACC May 2023 meeting - Agenda Item 6 (a)

Introduction

Dornoch Area Community Council (DACC) thanks *Communities 4 Coul and Not Coul* for their recent presentations at the public information gathering meeting to discuss the planning application **23/00580/FUL** for the '*Construction of an 18-hole golf course, practice area, access, parking, ancillary infrastructure and the change of use of existing buildings to form clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance shed and ancillary facilities*'

DACC notes:

- The informative contents of these presentations
- The respectful and diligent approach by all parties to explain complex information, data led arguments and scientific studies.
- The intricate and lengthy planning application.
- The requirement for multiple agencies to comment or be consulted
- The incredibly difficult job the Planning Committee faces to assess the enormous amount of information, data and opinion gathered to make a fact-based decision
- The large numbers of public comments already submitted to the planning application, including many residents of IV25 and the wider local travel to work area as identified by the applicant

Summary

DACC concludes that it is not required to assess the economic, scientific or other related data to determine or opine on the veracity of the application.

By providing a platform and space for interested parties to express their views and by encouraging letters of comment, support or objection to be submitted it has enabled a free and open debate and the views of constituents to be heard.

DACC also acknowledges these views are wide ranging and strongly felt by many, that residents may choose or have chosen other routes to express their support, otherwise or to stay silent.

Finally, that ultimately as this decision will be made by The Highland Council or Scottish Ministers there is no value in DACC trying to subjectively assess a definitive assessment of public opinion.

Conclusion

In light of the above, DACC has **no comment** to make regarding the planning application at this stage but reserves the right to assess any changes to this or similar applications or any future conditions to be recommended or imposed should this application be approved.

Genevieve Duhigg

17 May 2023