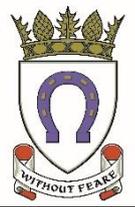


**GENERAL MEETING OF THE
DORNOCH AREA COMMUNITY COUNCIL (DACC)
AT THE CARNEGIE BUILDING CHAMBER, DORNOCH**

**WEDNESDAY 21ST JANUARY – 7PM
MINUTES**



1. Welcome & Apologies

Apologies received from AH, EDV and JMc.

2. Declarations of Interest

(Any interests relating to items on this agenda)

None were declared.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

a) Previous meeting minutes: [Link here](#)

The minutes were proposed by CM and seconded by LM. CF queried the reference in Section 13 to the “Fairy Glen”. LM clarified that this referred to Fairy Wood at Earls Cross. Subject to this clarification, the minutes were approved as an accurate record.

4. Visitors

a) Mr Abel Smith – Coul Farm

Mr Abel Smith (AS) introduced himself as the owner of the Coul Farm on the Embo approach road. He advised that while the Masterplan Consent Area (MCA) framework allows for up to 150 units within defined parameters, the intention would be to bring forward a proposal in the region of 50 houses. He mentioned that Inverness is between 1000 – 2500 houses but that does not mean there will be 2500 houses put forward for planning, noting that planning frameworks often include upper limits, which do not necessarily reflect the number of units ultimately delivered. AS advised that he was engaging with the Community Council at an early stage and would only take the proposal forward as far as the community wished. He stated that he wished to dispel rumours that 150 houses were proposed and emphasised that the development would not be progressed without community support. A public engagement event is scheduled for 29 January to gather feedback from the community.

MH questioned the redline boundary as it is extensive; however, AS commented that the development would sit within that area and would not necessarily utilise the whole site, subject to community feedback.

CM queried the anticipated timeline. AS advised that a standard planning process may take up to seven years, although the MCA framework suggests a shorter timescale, which may prove challenging in practice.

AS stated, that any development would aim to integrate with Embo rather than appear disconnected. CM questioned if there was any more word on the Coul Links, AS said that the process is still ongoing with the Scottish Ministers having it in their hands. CM asked for confirmation that even if Coul Links Golf Course didn't go ahead, the housing would. AS confirmed that the housing proposal and the Coul Links Golf Course planning application are separate matters. He advised that there may be two iterations of the housing proposal depending on whether the golf course proceeds, particularly in relation to affordable housing provision.

CF queried whether there is an identified need for at least 35 houses in the area irrespective of Coul Links. AS confirmed that this was his understanding and commented that the planning process can be complex, particularly where proposals depart from standard models.

MH asked about potential amenity areas. AS advised that this would be determined by community feedback. AS added, they have looked at wooded walks and foraging areas in the approach to Embo. AS stated, that he is looking for feedback from the community, for example someone may want tennis courts but if the community do not, they will not go ahead.

MH asked which of the site locations are correct and AS pointed this out and stated that it was in the application and confirmed that it did not go into a SSSI site and the area closest to it, will not be affected and will most likely be left wild. Public meetings will take place from 2pm until 7pm at Embo Community Hall, with further dates anticipated. AS reiterated that the more feedback received, the better.

CM thanked AS for attending.

b) Rob Smith – Davochfin Farm

RS queried perceived mixed messages from DACC, noting that planning permissions associated with Davochfin Farm had been delayed. LR confirmed that no objections had been submitted, only standard comments regarding road infrastructure for developments along the low road.

LR will email David Boreland to see if there are any issues and what the hold-up could be.

c) Fiona Richardson (FR)

FR was also in attendance and discussed the finances of DACC as shown below in section 8.

5. Matters Arising

(Actions or issues from the last meeting not covered elsewhere on the agenda)

Date of Next Meeting: 18TH February 2026

6. Planning Applications

- a) Erection of equestrian store building and formation of access
 - Land 245M SW Of Trades Cottage West Skibo Clashmore
 - Ref. No: 25/04859/FUL - [Link](#)
 - No comment
- b) Proposed residential development and associated infrastructure, landscaping and amenity areas.
 - Land 280M NW Of Station House Station Road Embo
 - Ref. No: 26/00141/SCRE - [Link](#)
 - MH brought up the acute housing pressure and FR said she would follow up with her colleagues.
 - No comment.
- c) Royal Dornoch Golf Club - Proposed 18 hole links golf course development
 - Land 575M South Of Tigh-Na-Orr Meadows Park Road Dornoch
 - Ref. No: 26/00135/SCRE - [Link](#)
 - CF questioned if the area was saltmarsh. RS (whose land borders theirs) confirmed that it is marshy but stated the RDGC would be raising areas. CF asked if it was SSSI and RS confirmed that the bottom part is, where the dunes are but not the whole site.
- d) Change of use from house to short term let
 - 4 Skelbo Farm Cottage Skelbo Dornoch IV25 3QG
 - Ref. No: 26/00094/FUL - [Link](#)
 - No comment
- e) Erection of 9no. illuminated fascia signs
 - 9no. Commercial Sites Around Dornoch Centre
 - Ref. No: 26/00091/ADV - [Link](#)
 - A discussion took place regarding the proposed signage. Concerns were raised that the signage differed from the original proposal presented when funding was sought from the Common Good Fund, particularly in relation to permanence on buildings.
 - RS clarified that he was not speaking on behalf of BID, but provided personal context regarding the selection process. He advised that BID had contacted all members to invite participation and that those who wished to be involved opted in.
 - Although not all members agreed, the consensus at the meeting was that as participating businesses supported the proposal, DACC would not submit a comment at that stage.
 - **Addendum:** Following the meeting, a significant number of objections (approximately 50) were submitted by local residents in response to the planning application. In light of this level of community concern, DACC subsequently submitted an objection.

7. Funding Applications

(Common Good Fund & Beinn Tharsuinn)

FR stated she received application for the Wetlands projects.

8. Finance Update

(Current financial position, approvals, or notable changes)

FR advised that she is preparing reports for the forthcoming financial year. Due to £280,000 having been drawn down for the new Community Centre, projected income is approximately £105,000 (including rent).

– £3,000 contribution towards staff costs

– £15,000 property and maintenance costs

– £25,000 repairs at Dornoch Beach Road

– £35,000 grants pot for community-led projects (less £9,200 allocated to the Wetlands project)

This would leave an estimated surplus of approximately £24,000 to be returned to Common Good reserves. Any unspent allocated funds would also revert to reserves.

It was noted that expectations will need to be managed regarding funding availability. LR will update the website to clarify how to access Common Good funding as CF brought up his concern for how applications are put in.

MH asked whether Common Good land boundaries could be extended, noting that they are currently centred on the town. FR advised she would raise the query, although boundaries are historically defined.

9. Highland Council Updates

(Updates from Highland Council members or officers)

MH questioned the Yellow Lines which were brought up in previous years – FR will bring this up.

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10. DACC Projects & Assets

(DACC-led projects, buildings, assets, Wetlands, Proposals, Torboll House, Airfield, LPP)

Wetlands Project

RS sought clarification on the scope of the Wetlands project, noting that there had been discussion locally regarding beavers. CF outlined the project and confirmed that beavers are not part of the short-term plan and remain a long-term consideration. RS also referenced examples of farms known to him where beavers have been present.

Torboll House

CF confirmed this matter is now closed.

A-Boards

CF raised concerns regarding A-boards and suggested that BID should have engaged with members regarding their removal. MH and RS advised that the matter had been raised with members, although BID cannot compel removal. CF suggested that Highland Council be notified to ensure appropriate licensing or enforcement. LR to action.

LPP

LR advised that, following advice from the Post Office, the date of the proposed leaflet drop had been amended. A leaflet drop is proposed for 2 March, with consultation proposed for 16 March. LR will seek confirmation from members.

Resilience Dornoch Group

LR updated the group on what the current Dornoch Resilience Group which is part of DADCA is and the project proposed by Neil Dalton was discussed. CF suggested that this matter falls more appropriately within the remit of DADCA rather than DACC. This was agreed.

Christmas Trees

The Christmas trees will be taken down on Friday and stored at RDGC. DACC extended thanks to those who assisted with installation and removal. MH and CM will email members to confirm availability to assist.

11. Roads & Pathways

(Roads, pavements, paths, parking, access issues, and ongoing concerns)

MH advised that comments had been received regarding a lack of grit bins. CM confirmed she would raise this matter. A discussion took place regarding priority roads and related matters.

12. Local Issues & Community Matters

(Other community issues not covered above – services, facilities, environment)

Council surgeries – not discussed.

13. Police Report

(Sent to members and discussed)

Noted.

14. Correspondence

(Items received since the last meeting requiring noting or discussion – in the OneDrive)

Noted.

15. Any Other Competent Business

(Urgent items only – not for introducing major new topics)