Minute of the meeting of **DACIC** board 22nd October 2020

Present: Joan Bishop **JB** (Chair), Jim McGillivray **JM**, Jayne Pagan **JP**, Paddy Murray **PM,** Neil Hampton **NH,** Shona MacDougall **SM,** Lynne Mahoney **LM**

Apologies: Catherine Moodie **CM,** Gordon Sutherland **GS**

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| 1. | Minute of meeting of 17th September 2020 | The minutes were proposed by **PM** and seconded by **SM.** |
| 2. | Matter Arising not covered elsewhere | There were no matters arising. |
| 3. | Membership Application | A membership application was received from Sanna CameronIt was agreed to accept the application. **JB** will phone and find out her interests. Sanna found out about DACIC through the website and applied online.  |
| 4. | Dornoch Police Station | 1. HIE has awarded DACIC £180k to completely renew the heating system, install double glazed windows, complete the rest of floor finishings and carry out the hostel refurb. There is a large contingency against heating because moving to pressurised water system may require upsizing the incoming water pipe/connection. The HIE funding also allows for the removal of underground tanks (with £5k from SLF) and with £2k from Beatrice allows for upgrade to fibre broadband into the building. This is a huge boost for the project, allowing all the work to be completed in one go. The work is due for completion in March and so the plan is to open the Hub in April.
2. Work on the gym will start next month. Silverback Gym cannot commit to an opening date yet as their focus is on rebuilding their business in Tain.
3. **JB** contacted a tree surgeon based in Tain about the trees with Dutch Elm disease. He came on the Sunday and reported that unfortunately all the elms in Dornoch will die. He asked about community group in terms of manpower and said that he will chop the trees down for free if we can get a group to help clear up. **JB** has not heard when the tree surgeon can come back yet. He said that there is a good range of trees so removing the elms it will give them more space.
4. MHO – licensing: **JB** has spoken to the MHO officer who suggested we could apply for a licence now in case there were any objections. The application is with the Council but Lisa Donaldson informed JB that the cost is £831, so submission is being held over until the new year.
5. **JP** has completed a 2-day Facilities Management Course and reported that it was an in-depth awareness course delivered by The Facilities Manager of Ascot Racecourse. This involves risk assessments which we will need to carry out before the Hub building can be occupied. **SM** also has extensive experience in this area. **SM** and **JP** to start the preparing something now to get ahead for April. **JB** will give input if needed. **JP** reported that there is lots of useful web material available and that she made some good contacts. **JB** thanked **PJ** for attending the course.
6. Project Update: Iain Levens had his first review meeting with O’Brien’s this week. An asbestos specialist, on site to deal with the items identified in the refurbishment asbestos survey, has uncovered that there is mastic around windows which in his opinion needs to be removed. The additional cost for this is £5k and only £2.8k contingency is included for the windows. *(Post meeting note: mastic round the doors was noted in the original report but not round the windows).* **JP** and **JM** asked if we could put in secondary glazing to save money, but **JB** felt we were committed as we have already ordered the windows because that was what we got money from HIE specifically for. **JM** said that asbestos is always the unknown quantity for a project like this. **JB** will ask **CM** to find out if we can get any financial help with this. **JB** also mentioned that £1600 each was budgeted for glass framing for one of the offices & to create a meeting room, but the cost is now £3200 each so we might have to reduce spending in other areas, e.g. carpets as they won’t be fitted until last. **JB** confirmed that the overall contingency is £16k on initial contract and £19k on the HIE extension and O’Brien’s thought this was enough. No money has been committed yet, but it is essential that the asbestos is removed safely *(post meeting note: if tests confirm asbestos in the mastic)*. There may be savings along the way and more efficient heating etc will bring down running costs. **JB** and **GS** are to have a Zoom meeting with Iain to discuss how to overcome these problems. **PM** felt that the board needed to be aware of any more ‘provisional sums’ and that control was needed of these to bring the project in on budget. **JB** to circulate this to board members before the next meeting, so that **JB** does not have to shoulder the burden. All is going well inside the Hub. We are planning monthly billing with O’Brien’s which means we can pay them and then claim from HIE. We already have funding from SSE & Pot 170 and can claim on invoice from The National Lottery and the Town Centre Fund.
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| 5.  | Project Curlew | 1. The Solicitor is still working on the Offer to Purchase. Now we are proposing a one way system, ANM require a bellmouth into the gasworks and permission to access the one way system to exit for a future purchaser of the remaining land. **JB** has stated that it is unrealistic for us to put the road in until we get the development funding for the car park (i.e. post purchase).
2. Planning application has been submitted.
3. Contractor tenders received and there is a funding gap – to be addressed with bids to Crown Estates & TCF. The flood plain means the level of the ground cannot be raised. Fairhurst has identified an area on the southeast of the site out with the flood plain to use for the stockpile. The drainage plan to get rid of surface water includes a SuDS basin to feed into the black burn, which is owned by RDGC. A site meeting is being arranged with RDGC to discuss this.
4. RTIF submitted – we will know the outcome on 4th December. £375k has been applied for against costs of £570k. The land ownership is seen as in-kind funding contributing to overall project costs of £710k. There will be a new round of Town Centre Fund and Crown Estate Fund managed by Highland Council so we can put in for the balance from them. Earliest consideration would be February. **JB** reported that there is no application process presently, but an Expression of Interest was sent to Phil Tomalin. However, there needs to be a formal one put in and **JM** will speak to Phil Tomalin about it. **JB** to follow up.

**PM** asked if we have enough money for the land alone. **JB** confirmed that we have funding from Scottish Land Fund based on our car park plan as phase one of the wider Project Curlew. When we are ready to exchange contracts, they will forward the grant. **PM** asked if we can still go ahead with the purchase of the land if we do not get planning for the carpark. **JB** reported that the planning was a condition with ANM for the purchase. However, if we do not get the RTIF, Town Centre and Crown Estates money then the carpark cannot go ahead in its current format. **JB** advised that we should carry on until we know we cannot proceed any further, and that at a similar stage in the purchase of the Police Station, we had no funding for the refurbishment, but it had come in. **PM** feels we still need more discussion, so the board understands all the options. **JB** said that if necessary, we can walk away from the project.V. Scottish Curling update:Scottish Curling are keen to get involved to develop young people’s interest in Curling going so that when we get the rink, young people will see it as a good thing (a previous survey showed they had no knowledge of curling). Scottish Curling are working on a plan to introduce floor curling into Dornoch, Golspie and Tain Secondary and associated Primary Schools. CM will apply to ‘Awards For All’ for equipment on behalf of North Highland Curling Trust, for this initiative which includes a competition between the schools with the prize being a visit to Inverness Ice Centre to try curling on the ice. |
| 6.  | C Moodie report | **CM** is working on BID/SID seed fund application. **SM** and **JP** had a zoom call with **CM** and feel that she had lots of information for a first draft. **CM** will circulate draft when she returns from leave. |
| 7.  | Coronavirus | 1. Single household per self-catering has caused difficulty for larger houses and those catering for golf parties.
2. Restricted hospitality until 2nd November, then tiered system. Castle and Eagle worked very hard to get things set up for outdoor dining with help from other business group members.
3. Planit Scotland winter campaign: **JB** had reported that only 29 entries received to date so the photography competition will be extended to the end of November. Planit Scotland are chasing up people. Lucy will go through regular contributors to Visit Dornoch to ask for submissions. The imagery on the webpage has been changed so that the competition looks more accessible to amateur photographers. NT interested in publishing the winning photo so we hope they will also promote the competition.
4. Website visits have risen by 36% compared to last year. Most hits on food and drink. The DO page needs a little work. Lucy is doing blog posts to promote features like working holidays, Dine in Dornoch and NC500. It was felt that the town is still busy and **JB** enquired about the beach toilets. **PM** confirmed that could stay open until the end of November.
5. Visitor Centre staff: With both the Hub and Courthouse unavailable we cannot offer a face to face service to visitors. The furlough scheme is due to end at the end of the month. Our business group income is severely depleted. **JB** spoke to both members of staff and explained the situation. Both are supportive of the plan to resume the service in April. Lou may do some marketing.
6. Love Local grants £500 - £5000 are available, but we already have marketing funding from them, so will not be the priority. **JB** will follow up, however.
7. Potential grant from HIE for an upgrade to Mobile App. This was designed by Purple Frog in 2015, but we now understand that it is actually a Web based application rather than a native App and therefore cannot supply Google analytics. £2,500 would mean that we can get it rewritten to collect data plus £500 per year to host. **JB** enquired about getting it on the cloud which would be a cost of £100 per year. A grant would need to be spent by the end of March.
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 | 1. BID/SID: **SM** is happy with the way this is going.
2. The AGM will be held on Thursday 10th December 7pm via Zoom (**JB** to check with **GS**). **JB** will get in touch with Business Group members and ask them to confirm by email that they wish to attend the meeting, she will then invite by email link. We need 22 people to attend for a quorum. A board meeting will follow instead of the one planned for 17th December. **GS**, **NH** and **PM** will step down by rotation, but can offer themselves for re-election. Everyone else will remain on the board and others will be asked to join. **JB** will place an advertisement in The Northern Times.
3. A Christmas Outdoor Market is to be held on 5th December with a switching on of the Christmas lights. **PM** to confirm this.
4. Possible Santa’s Tour on ESRA boat with a letter box on the Cathedral green to allow children to give their letters to Santa. TBC - possible date 12th December.
5. ‘Light up for Christmas’ **JB** reported about a Danish idea of having lights in windows throughout the winter. It was agreed that this would be a good idea for the town, ‘Light up Dornoch’. It was hoped that Susan Brown might take this on as she responded to the initial share on social media.
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| 9. | Community Updates | 1. Dornoch Community Council: **PM** reported that the CC had been working to tidy up municipal projects starting with the bank steps. There are plans for the toilets to be refurbished over winter. CC are working with partners at the beach and via HIE chaired Dornoch Focus Group to address parking, wild camping etc. before tourists come next year.
2. DADCA: **PM** reported that the Social Club was reopening with Dornoch Christian Fellowship as the user. Donald Goskirk had completed an excellent risk assessment. **SM** commented that it was helpful to get a good practice model. The Club may be opened to other users in January depending on restrictions. There has painting and maintenance completed while the club has been closed (e.g. windows).
3. Embo Trust: **JM** reported on a decrease in volunteers. They will therefore cease deliveries and open the shop with funding from Scotland Loves Local fund. Grannies Heilin’ Hame closes at the end of November after a busy season.
4. UHI: **JM** reported that the Principal of North Highland College has retired, and the Secretary is also moving on. The building works will probably be completed in January.
5. Historylinks: **LM** reported that 4 films were released to complete the Longhouse Project. The museum extension is at the planning stage. It has been a good season which will hopefully continue as the museum will be staying open until at least New Year.
6. RDGC: **NH** reported that visitors are still trickling in. He has spent the last 3 days at a virtual International Marketing Conference. The message is that people are keen to get away next year. That is, domestic as well as international visitors and as soon as we have vaccine etc, they will travel. Numbers booked for next year are looking good. Enquiries are coming in and from April onwards things should be opening internationally.
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| 10.  | Financial Statement | **JB** has had some income from businesses and has asked them to renew if they can afford to. Targeting £500 income per month until March. So far there has been £1038 invoiced in September and £1760 in October making a total of £3443 ytd. Some allowance for contingency but **JB** to update now. P & L and balance sheet circulated. |
| 11. | AOCB | 1. Common Good Consultation has been circulated regarding the Takeaway Food Van (similar to the [Seafood Shack in Ullapool](https://www.seafoodshack.co.uk/)). **PM** reported that business group members could be affected but the CC think it is a good idea and the suggestion is a trial of one year. It will offer local seafood and venison, will be up market and situated between the play park and caravans in a good position. Opening hours 10am to 6pm and perhaps evenings. The Dornoch Caravan Site is supportive of the plan. It was confirmed that the Vendor will be responsible for any litter occurring at the site. **SM** pointed out that cars might be a problem and **NH** mentioned that cars are a concern for RDGC. **PM** commented that charging for parking may be an option and reinforced the need for bins and cleanliness. Response to be drafted and agreed at next meeting.
2. Short Term let support for ASSC. ASSC has written to Government calling for the levy to be postponed again and asked if Visit Dornoch would support them in this. It was agreed that this should be supported. **JB** to confirm to them.
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| 12. | DOMN | 19th November 7pm by Zoom |