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DORNOCH BID NEWSLETTER

NON-DOMESTIC RATES REVALUATION WORKSHOP

24 April 2026 13:00-1:30pm
Dornoch Station Hotel

There's still time to book for this upcoming session designed to help businesses understand the recent revaluation changes. Hear directly from Frazer Fergusson, Assessor at the Highland and Western Isles Valuation Joint Board, and gain clear, practical guidance. The session will cover how valuations are set, what's changed, proposals and appeals, and key deadlines to be aware of. There will also be an opportunity to ask questions and speak with the valuation team afterwards.

BOOK YOUR PLACE

NON-DOMESTIC RATES REVALUATION MEMBER SURVEY

We're collecting a quick snapshot of how the recent revaluation has impacted BID members. The survey takes under 2 minutes to complete, with all responses treated confidentially and reported in aggregate. **Deadline** 22 April.

SURVEY - HAVE YOUR SAY

SMALL BUSINESS RATES RELIEF UPDATE

Following the 2026 revaluation, changes to your property's rateable value may affect your Small Business Bonus Scheme (SBBS) relief. If the 5 April 2026 revaluation or other circumstances have changed, you may need to reapply or update your details to ensure the correct relief is applied.

CHECK YOUR ELIGIBILITY

SPREAD THE WORD NORTH HIGHLAND ELECTION HUSTINGS

20 April 2026 6:00-8:00pm
Royal Marine Hotel, Brora (Business event)

North Highland Chamber of Commerce is hosting a series of Election Hustings events ahead of the 2026 Scottish Parliament election, bringing together candidates for the Caithness, Sutherland and Easter Ross constituency. The Brora session will be a business event, giving local businesses the opportunity to hear from and support a more consistent and fair system for renewals. The survey closes on **Sunday 19 April** (midnight). Survey link: You can find the survey and full details below.

YOU CAN FIND THE SURVEY AND FULL DETAILS HERE

SHORT-TERM LET LICENSING OPERATOR SURVEY (ASSC)

IMPORTANT SURVEY

Short-Term Let Licensing Renewals 2026

Supporting Self-Catering in Scotland

ASSC has launched a short survey for short-term let operators to gather feedback on the licence renewal process across Scotland, highlighting concerns about inconsistent approaches between local authorities. In some cases, licences being issued for shorter timeframes than expected, ASSC is asking operators to complete the survey to support a more consistent and fair system for renewals. The survey closes on **Sunday 19 April** (midnight). Survey link: You can find the survey and full details below.

YOU CAN FIND THE SURVEY AND FULL DETAILS HERE

SPRING HIGHLAND FESTIVAL 5 – 25 April 2026

The Spring Highland Festival is well underway. The festival has benefitted from strong promotion, including printed programmes, Meta advertising campaigns, banners and listings on national and regional websites.

Thank you to those who have shared posts. We would be grateful for members' support in **endorsing** posts on social channels and **displaying** the programme in your premises. Word of mouth is very important too so please help spread the word about what's on in town. Copies of programme are available at Historylinks Museum and the Royal Golf Hotel. The **Visitor Maps** can also be collected at both locations.

We're starting to plan for the **Autumn Highland Festival**. Setting dates will allow marketing to start sooner, helping extend the visitor season and attract more people. If you'd like to get involved, please get in touch as soon as possible. The festival programme is to be **finalised by 15th May**.

SPRING HIGHLAND FESTIVAL

EVENTS & SPECIAL OFFERS WEBSITE LISTINGS

A reminder to members that you can promote your events free of charge on the Dornoch website events page. This is a great way to increase visibility and attract both visitors and locals throughout the year. Members can also list special offers to help encourage visitors to stay longer, discover deals and support local businesses.

Submit your event/offer for inclusion in the links below, please email the BID.

Events: **thisisdornoch.com/events**

Special offers: **thisisdornoch.com/accommodation/spring-special-offers**

HISTORYLINKS MUSEUM BID MEMBERS INVITATION

BID members and their staff, **particularly those in direct contact with visitors/customers,** are invited to attend an Open Morning at Historylinks Museum, Taking place on Tuesday 21 May from 11am – 12 noon, please email Lynne at **sandra@thisisdornoch.co.uk** to book your slot and/or for more information. Places are limited.

If you would like to host a visit for BID members to visit/experience your business please get in touch with the BID to discuss.

MANAGING RISING ENERGY COSTS

Energy prices have become more volatile recently, with electricity costs increasing by around 10-30% and gas prices rising by 25-80%. While households have some protection through the price cap, businesses remain more directly affected, particularly when contracts are due for renewal or if operating on variable rates.

Ofgem's Business Energy Guidance highlights that, as fixed-price contracts expire, businesses may wish to review current arrangements to better manage potential cost increases. Michael at Eyeright provides help on contract options, budget forecasts, and purchasing strategies to help reduce risk. An energy invoice is of that's needed for an initial review. For more info, email **m.duncan@eyeright@hotmail.co.uk**

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND TRAVEL TRADE PROGRAMME 2026-2027

VisitScotland is seeking early expressions of interest for its 2026-27 Travel Trade events and Regional Development Workshops. The information gathered will help shape the upcoming programme of business development activity and ensure opportunities are aligned with industry needs and regional priorities. Events will be by invitation in advance, with further details to be confirmed nearer the time. Any information submitted will only be used for programme planning and updates, in line with VisitScotland's privacy policy below.

VISITSCOTLAND'S PRIVACY POLICY

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITY SUMMER/AUTUMN 'WHAT'S ON' LEAFLET

Dornoch BID invites members to consider sponsoring the Summer/Autumn edition of our popular 'What's On' leaflet. This is an excellent opportunity to promote your business while supporting local events and visitor marketing across the area. The leaflet is distributed from **1st July** to **31st October** and provides a practical way to showcase everything happening locally and encourage increased footfall throughout the season. If interested, please contact **dornochbid@thisisdornoch.com** Sponsorship is available at a cost of £250.

DORNOCH AERODROME PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR BID MEMBERS

Highlar Unlyited, Dornoch Aerodrome has very kindly offered a small amount of display space on notice boards within the pilot lounge for BID members' promotional materials, including menus, business cards, and event flyers. Highlar has also kindly offered to print A4 colour posters, so digital artwork can be sent directly to Highlar Unlyited, Dornoch Aerodrome. The aerodrome is located approximately 2 miles (about a 5 filed Street as there is currently no pavement on the aerodrome).

By many visiting pilots and passengers arrive without prior planning and are often short-stay visitors, this provides a valuable opportunity to promote local businesses and attractions at the point of arrival. All promotion is offered free of charge, with the aim of supporting local businesses and improving visitor awareness.

MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS!

BID membership gives you marketing exposure and practical business support but the value comes when you act. Take five minutes to review your membership and check you are using everything available to you. If not, get in touch. We're here to help you maximise the benefits. The latest list can be viewed **HERE**.

Quick wins include:

- Free listing on website: log in up to date
- Tag @thisisdornoch on social media to reach 20k+ followers
- Share your special offers, events or site availability
- Use our professional images to promote your business

Beyond marketing, don't forget:

- Attend BID events to make connections
- WhatsApp groups for quick updates and support
- Regular newsletters to keep you informed
- Strong lobbying voice representing your interests

MEMBER COMMUNICATIONS

Stay up to date - The Minutes of the BID Board meetings are saved at the base of the website homepage.

WhatsApp Groups - There are Retail, Accommodation, Restaurant and Professional Services WhatsApp groups. A **General BID Group has also been added.**Please text the BID on 07411 200103 to have your number added to the relevant groups.

'Dornoch BID' Facebook Page - This is for member communications, business updates, funding opportunities, consultations, a behind the scenes look at how our support businesses, plus the latest on local projects and ways to get involved in our community. Please follow 'Bidsinscotland' on Facebook and tag us to share your updates. Give this page a like and/or leave a comment.

'This is Dornoch' Facebook and Instagram - Follow **@thisisdornoch** on Facebook and **@visitdornoch** on Instagram and discover local shops & services, seasonal events, town news, community celebrations, and tourism campaigns bringing visitors to the town. Remember to tag us to re-share your posts and please share our posts.

Get in touch - Email **Dornochbid@thisisdornoch.com** to discuss any membership matter and/or to arrange a call or meeting with Sharon, Dornoch BID Manager.

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