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PROMOTING DORNOCH | SUPPORTING BUSINESS | WORKING TOGETHER

DORNOCH BID NEWSLETTER
September 2026

Welcome to September's Newsletter and what a busy autumn there is ahead for Dornoch! The Autumn Festival is just four weeks away, and the BID is busy continuing to work on promotion, events, town improvements, funding opportunities and issues that matter to local businesses.

We're also entering an important period for the Highland Visitor Levy, with the statutory consultation now underway and a programme of industry engagement taking place across Highland.

Read on to find out more about these key updates, member opportunities and how you can help make this one of the best autumn's yet for our wonderful town.

AUTUMN HIGHLAND FESTIVAL IS ALMOST HERE!
23rd October - 5th November

The **Autumn Highland Festival** is just 4 weeks away and the programme is out and about in key locations.

PLEASE get copies to share with your customers and guests, they are available from Historylinks Museum and Town and Country Lettings.

We have a fantastic programme of food, whisky, history, music, golf, crafts and family activities. All events are being promoted online with the BID supporting the festival through social media, press activity and wider promotion.

We'd really appreciate BID members helping us to spread the word. Please

- Share Festival posts on your social media
- Tell your guests what's on
- Display the Festival programme in your business
- Encourage customers to book events

Every booking helps bring visitors into Dornoch and creates more

opportunities for local businesses to benefit.

We would also love to highlight any **special accommodation offers you have available during the Festival fortnight** on the 'This Is Dornoch' website and through the BID's social media channels.

Please email Kathryn at **marketing@thisisdornoch.com** with details of your offer.

Thank you for helping us make it a great autumn for Dornoch!

VIEW THE AUTUMN HIGHLAND FESTIVAL PROGRAMME

MEMBERS' NETWORKING EVENT AND BUFFET

Wednesday 7 October 5.30pm–8.45pm

Our next Members' Networking takes place at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club where we'll be joined by Ray Watt, HRFCA Defence Relationship Manager, who will talk about the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme.
There will also be a BID update, including the latest information on the Highland Visitor Levy.

It's a great opportunity to meet other local businesses, make connections and hear what's happening across Dornoch.

Book your place now

DORNOCH BID CHRISTMAS PARTY

Dornoch Station | 12 December | 7pm-12am

We're thrilled to invite you to this year's Dornoch Businesses' Christmas Party at the fabulous Dornoch Station on 12th December!

Tickets are £45 per person, which includes a welcome drink, 2-course meal, teas and coffees, followed by a disco and a fabulous night of entertainment in a very special setting.

Enjoy great food, festive fun, and Christmas cheer as we come together to celebrate the season and another fantastic year for Dornoch's business community.

Take a **look at the delicious looking menu.** A book link will be available soon, but make sure you mark the date in your diary!

HIGHLAND VISITOR LEVY

Have your say

The Highland Visitor Levy consultation is now underway and runs until **30 November 2026**.

Although the levy would be collected through visitor accommodation, any impact on visitor numbers, length of stay and visitor spending could be felt across Dornoch's wider business community, including shops, cafés, restaurants, attractions and other visitor-facing businesses. This has potential implications for employment and the long-term economic health of the town.

It is therefore important that businesses understand the proposals and you have your say in Highland Council's Visitor Levy consultation.

View and complete the consultation

Industry Evidence and Engagement Programme

Alongside the Council's statutory consultation, Visit Inverness Loch Ness BID is co-ordinating an industry evidence and engagement programme with businesses and industry organisations across Highland.

The sessions are designed to allow businesses to discuss the practical issues arising from the proposed levy and provide evidence around matters such as administration, pricing, seasonality, visitor behaviour and the wider impact on the visitor economy.

Camping, Caravanning & Outdoor Accommodation
Monday 5 October | 2.30pm–4.30pm
Dornoch Station, IV25 3LF

A dedicated session for campsites, caravan parks and outdoor accommodation, including discussion of the proposed £2 rate, seasonality, administration and the rural visitor economy.

Book your place

Self-Catering & Short-Term Lets
Wednesday 7 October | 1pm–3pm
Ullapool – central venue, IV26 2XB
Looking at pricing, booking platforms, administration, visitor behaviour and the different business models operating across Highland.

Book your place

Highland Industry Forum
Wednesday 4 November | 3.30pm–5.30pm
Fort William Highland Cinema, PH33 6AJ
Bringing together businesses, representative organisations and stakeholders from across Highland to consider the evidence and themes emerging from the engagement programme.

Book your place

Visitor Economy
Thursday 5 November | 4pm–6pm
Nairn Community & Arts Centre, IV12 4BQ
A wider session looking beyond accommodation at the implications for attractions, food and drink, retail, activities, transport and other visitor-economy businesses.

Book your place

The industry sessions are structured around evidence gathering. Councillors attending are there to listen to businesses and gather information to help inform the consultation process.

If you are able to attend a relevant session, we would encourage you to take the opportunity to contribute your experience and questions.

PROMOTING DORNOCH THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

Dornoch continues to attract strong engagement across our social media channels. Recent BID content has performed particularly well, with one Facebook post about **Loch Fleet reaching 67,000 people**!

We're now increasing the amount of regular content shared through the Members' section of the website, alongside **monthly blogs** and updates.

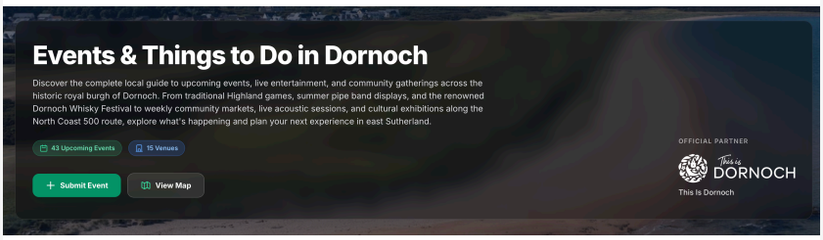
Help us reach more people simply by:

- Liking BID posts
- Commenting and sharing
- Tagging your business where relevant
- Sending us news, events and content to feature

The more local businesses engage with and share content, the further we can extend Dornoch's reach!

And don't forget to **tag @thisisdornoch** if you post anything on Facebook and **@visitdornoch** on Instagram. We will then share it and help your post reach even more people!

HIGHLANDS EVENTS HUB



We are delighted to have partnered with the **Highlands Events Hub** to promote key Dornoch events, including the Autumn Highland Festival. The platform is completely free to use, and allows businesses and event organisers to add their own events.

Please also let us know if you have an event coming up and we will add it to the Events page on the This is Dornoch website.

COMMERCIAL WASTE

Exploring a Group Arrangement

Thank you to everyone who has responded to the BID's commercial waste survey.

Two commercial waste providers, both of whom already operate in Dornoch, have confirmed they would be interested in offering a group arrangement for Dornoch businesses, with the potential for preferential pricing where sufficient volume can be combined.

To allow us to obtain meaningful group pricing, we now need a little more information about your bins, collection frequencies, and waste services.

If you would like to be included, please complete the short survey by 25 October 2026:
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScyktYnrYSSxc1fAg6edoywMm63yChsOXiiwZ-3eBxfKZ1x0Q/viewform?usp=publish-editor

Completing the survey does not commit you to changing provider or joining a group arrangement. It will simply help us establish the level of potential demand before approaching providers for pricing.

JOIN OUR NEXT TOWN TIDY ON 6 OCTOBER

Our last Town Tidy of the year takes place on 6th October at the earlier time of 4pm to 6pm.

A huge thank you to everyone who helps out. Earlier this month **volunteers** helped clear weeds from the steps leading to UHI, along with tidying other parts of the town.

Everyone is welcome, so whether you're a regular volunteer or joining for the first time, please come along. After the tidy, they will be some well-earned tea and cake at the Social Club.

MEMBER OPPORTUNITY

THE AMERICAN HIGHLANDER

You may have seen Jason "The American Highlander" mentioned in the BID's newsletter. Jason is passionate about supporting Highland businesses and showcasing the people, places and businesses that make the region special through his YouTube channel, **The American Highlander,** which now has more than 47,000 followers.

Jason is interested in discovering and promoting interesting Highland businesses, and this could provide a valuable opportunity for Dornoch BID members to introduce their business or story to a wider audience.

If you think your business could be a good fit for Jason's channel and would like to explore the opportunity, **please get in touch with the BID**. We'd be happy to make an introduction to Jason and leave you to explore the opportunity directly with him.

This could be particularly relevant to businesses with an interesting story, distinctive offering, local products, experiences or something that showcases what makes Dornoch and the surrounding area so special.

MEMBER OPPORTUNITY

VisitScotland | Scotland's New Experiences
2–3 December 2026 | Edinburgh

Visit Scotland™

Scotland's National Tourism Organisation

Buidheann Turasachd Nàiseanta na h-Alba

VisitScotland is inviting Scottish businesses with **new, distinctive and bookable visitor experiences** to register their interest in a two-day event connecting businesses with international **Destination Management Companies (DMCs)** through one-to-one appointments.

This could be a useful opportunity for Dornoch businesses offering experiences in areas such as: Food and drink, Whisky, Heritage, Outdoor activities, Wellness, Culture and Craft.

If you have a new or distinctive experience that is **ready to be sold and booked by visitors**, this could be an opportunity to put it in front of international travel trade buyers.

Interested? Register your interest directly with VisitScotland at **Travel.Trade@visitscotland.com.**

MAKING TAX DIGITAL EVENT

Wednesday 18th November
6:30pm - 8:00pm Venue TBC

Making Tax Digital Information Evening

Did you know that **from April 2027**, the income tax self assessment threshold drops to £30,000? This means if you're a sole trader or landlord and **your turnover is over £30,000 before expenses** you have to be ready for Making Tax Digital.

The good news is, it's not as scary as it sounds!

This BID Members' information evening run Pam Munro from **Munro Accounting Services Ltd**, will ensure you go away knowing:

✅ What the changes are
✅ Who they will affect
✅ How to prepare

We still need to confirm the venue, but if you are interested in coming along please email: **marketing@thisisdornoch.com** to book your place.

ROYAL DORNOCH HISTORIC TOURS

Creating Great Memories for Cruise Visitors

Over 20 tours have taken place this season, welcoming cruise liner visitors to discover Dornoch's fascinating history and stories.

The Royal Dornoch Historic Tour includes guided visits to Dornoch Cathedral and Historylinks Museum, made possible thanks to our wonderful volunteers. Visitors spend around 45 minutes at each, before having a couple of hours to explore the town for themselves.

A huge thank you and well done to all the volunteers for sharing your knowledge and helping create such great memories for our cruise ship visitors.

We hope to see even more tours booked next year, with exciting plans for tours for non-cruise visitors too. More details coming soon

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KEEP IN TOUCH

If you have news, events, offers, business updates or ideas that you would like the BID to share, please get in touch. The more information we have from our members, the better we can promote Dornoch and support the local business community.

This is DORNOCH

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