

**DORNOCH BID BOARD MEETING, 7pm Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, Dornoch Hub.  
MINUTES OF MEETING.**

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Ginny Knox (**GK**), Colin Thompson (**CT**), Catherine MacCulloch (**CM**), Sharon Mackay (**SM**), John Duhigg (JD), Jim McGillivray (**J McG**) Claire Bruce (**CB**), Robert Smith (**RS**), Gareth Dixon (**GD**).

**APOLOGIES:**, John Duhigg, (**JD**) Mark Grant (**MG**) Jo Johnston (**JJ**)

	ITEM	DISCUSSION NOTE	ACTION
1	Matters arising from previous minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Town Clean Up</b> DACC looking into feasibility of using Community Payback Orders to help with a town tidy. John Mackay from THC to walk the town with JMcG &amp; SM to see how things could be improved. Also, possible funding for a <b>P/T Town Warden</b> has emerged – a “returning parent” fund at THC. Subsequently, Luke Watson’s resourcing employer may be able to pick up the salary. Sharon to pick up with a lady called Wonda @ THC</li> <li>• <b>Highland Broadband Dornoch Town Wi-Fi</b> JMcG to see what can be done to jolt THC into giving permission for Dornoch WiFi to be switched on,</li> <li>• <b>Park Run</b> – Needs funding of c.£7k for set-up. Scottish Building Society Foundation may be ideal source of funds. Can Vhairi or Alexander Richardson help with writing a grant application?</li> <li>• <b>Adoption of previous minutes</b> - Proposed <b>CM</b>, and seconded <b>GK</b>.</li> </ul>	<p><b>SM</b></p> <p><b>SM</b></p> <p><b>JMcG</b></p> <p><b>SM</b></p>
2	<p><b>Finance</b></p> <p><b>Grants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Many thanks to MG for working on the Year-end numbers.</li> <li>• It is looking quite tight to fund the things we want to - and to maintain a positive cashflow in March/April.</li> <li>• Sharon to check with Roz at THC how much our “residual payment” will be (£4,500?) – and whether they will waive their “collection fee” of £2,870</li> <li>• In principle, agreed we want to fund £500 of social media advertising for Spring Highland Festival Fortnight AND £2,000 for a new “Events” page on the website.</li> </ul> <p>SM has worked on investigating available grants in some detail. We agreed the following grants are the highest priority to pursue, through a combination of size, appropriateness and lack of onerous bureaucracy involved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Community Regeneration Fund</b> (inc Highland Coastal Communities Fund) This has c. £700k to give out to Sutherland &amp; is available after Easter.</li> <li>2. <b>SSEN</b> Fund – which is huge and opens up in Summer ‘25</li> <li>3. <b>Scottish Building Society Foundation</b>. Offering grants up to £5k.</li> <li>4. <b>Dornoch Common Good Fund</b>. Up to £35k pa</li> <li>5. <b>North Highland Initiative</b>. Offering grants up to £2k.</li> </ol> <p>Sharon will now work out which parts of our expenditure plan should be applied for under each grant. A recommendation to sent out to the BID Board.</p>	<p><b>SM</b></p> <p><b>GK/CB</b></p> <p><b>SM</b></p>
3	Proposed Tourist Tax update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Northern BID’s TT Survey</b> is out at the moment with members. The response has been very poor everywhere (though marginally better in Dornoch). Sharon to urge members to send in their responses ASAP. All to urge friends to respond.</li> <li>• In the last week, <b>Sharon has written to all Highland Councillors</b> telling them of our opposition (with reasons) to the tax, and urging them to Vote NO.</li> </ul>	<b>SM/All</b>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have also written to all <b>Sutherland Community Councils</b>, asking them to take a resolution condemning the tax and to send it to Raymond Bremner @ THC. (This following the example of Skye, where all CC's have done this).</li> <li><b>DACC and DACIC</b> have confirmed they support our stance on the TT, and will write to THC.</li> <li><b>Northern Times article</b> regarding Dornoch BID's opposition arose because NT Reporter attended DACC meeting.</li> <li>GK has liased with Clare Winskell in Skye (ex-lawyer and director of STA) who has now raised sufficient funds to pay for a <b>legal opinion</b> as to the legality of THC's TT proposal</li> <li><b>Tim Eagle MSP</b> (List H&amp;I, Cons) is trying to get X-party opposition group &amp; petition/letter to Kate Forbes going in Holyrood. GK to inquire as to when this might come through.</li> </ul>	GK
4.	<b>Events</b>	<p><b>Spring &amp; Autumn Highland Festival Fortnights</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Definitive list of April events to be given to Claire, so all social media posts can be created/website pages finalised.</li> <li>£500 of SM advertising to be run.</li> <li>Sharon to persuade all businesses to repeat April events into October, to avoid re-inventing the wheel.</li> <li>Whisky Festival details to be shared with Claire, so everything can be on Website in a timely fashion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Follow-up meeting with other voluntary groups – 11<sup>th</sup> March @ TRGH</b></p> <p><b>Event Publicity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agreed we should pay for new Website page (£2k), but should ask other groups for a contribution</li> <li>Also agreed with CT it would be a good idea to put out a virtual weekly newsletter saying “what’s on” - for businesses to print themselves. BUT who would do it? Ideas please!</li> </ul>	<p>SM/CB GK</p> <p>SM</p> <p>CT GK/SM</p> <p>CB/GK</p> <p>SM/All</p>
5.	<b>Signage Update</b>	SM & CM met with Gary Gruber from Skibo who now own Sutherland Stonework assets. Skibo have kindly offered to create stone signs for Dornoch town. So what do we want?	CM
6.	<b>Social Media Audit</b>	CM has undertaken a fascinating audit of the Social Media activity of Dornoch BID's members. Only 10% of levy-payers are regularly posting on Social media. 56% of our members don't even have any S.M. accounts. <b>SM meeting</b> to be set up by CM in next fortnight, to discuss ways to improve matters. NB: 85% of Website traffic comes from SM.	CM
7	<b>Website activity</b>	Claire will send the latest report from Elastic to the BID Board. There are some excellent-sounding headline numbers, but we agreed the Board (and members) need to be seeing <b>regular KPI's</b> – so we can properly judge what is working and what isn't. Claire/Elastic to develop. Many thanks also to Claire who has written <b>3 website blogs</b> in Feb, to boost the Website's SEO. SM ask all businesses to <b>share a link</b> to “This is Dornoch” on their Website	<p>CB</p> <p>CB</p> <p>SM</p>
8.	<b>AOB</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>C/F Northern Recycling to quote for providing a refuse service.</li> <li>GK to send CB Station Hotel's '24 offer to fund Dornoch flowers.</li> <li>Management changes in Dornoch: Castle GM Matt is going to Station Hotel and Angela, GM from Royal Golf, is going to the Castle.</li> <li>Warning! THC are not yet set up for STL license renewals, some of which are due in 2026</li> </ul>	<p>SM</p> <p>GK</p>

**NEXT MEETING – 7pm, Mon 31<sup>st</sup> March in the Hub.**