

MINUTES, DORNOCH BID BOARD MEETING.

7pm Monday 4 May

IN ATTENDANCE: Gareth Dixon (**GD**), Claire Bruce (**CB**), Colin Thompson (**CT**), Ginny Knox (**GK**), Jo Johnston (**JJ**), Matt Logie (**ML**), Sharon Mackay (**SM**).

Apologies: Robert Smith (**RS**)

ITEM	DISCUSSION NOTE	ACTION
Matters/Actions arising from last minutes -	Dornoch Town Wi-Fi. Switch-on date TBC. Kit is working on the portal next week once the replacement access point arrives. SM requested a link to the BID “What’s On” from the portal. CB suggested home page too.	SM
	BID Christmas Party. Awaiting quotation from Graeme at RDGC. SM to follow up.	SM
	Town Tidy (TT). Next TT is tomorrow at 5.30pm. JJ’s TT FB post on the BID members page mentions the Royal visit. A rehearsal takes place during TT. CB suggested an extra 7pm - 8pm shift. GD advised Princess Anne will be visiting the Cathedral and the Green. A banner to promote future TTs/crowdfund QR code to be made.	
	New Directors. CB to contact someone she thinks could be interested. GK to contact Neil at RDGC re either Neil or Claire joining the Board.	SM
	We Are Dornoch (WAD). Crowdfunding spending to be set out on the WAD website. £532 was approved for Flowers and Fairs to paint planters and buy more flowers. GK and JJ to meet with Donald and Paddy regarding future WAD activity.	CB/GK JJ/GK
Finance -	Adoption of minutes. Proposed by GK, and seconded by CB	
	Monthly report and Forecasting. Current bank balance is £79,550k, majority of which on deposit. Just over £5k to be paid to Dornoch Gatherings (DG). JJ to transfer income this week. £12k vat to pay in July re BID. Cash flow includes VAT, CB’s website monies, website promotions, new website sales page, and £6k for AHF 2026, subject to funding being secured. JJ was thanked for her work.	JJ
	NDR Levy/Opt In Member Updates:	
	- <u>Opt-in Members</u> - Chameleon House has joined. Highland Patisserie expected to Opt In. SM to follow up and approach additional larger businesses	SM
	- <u>NDR Members</u> - No new entries. One member received backdated bill. The policy agreed at the last Board meeting to be applied. SM spoke to Assessor about backdating matter and asked if BID could be notified of new entries coming onto the valuation role far earlier. The Assessor has agreed to look at this.	
	A large NDR BID member requested to ‘opt out’ of membership. SM read a draft response which sets out membership criteria. The Board agreed to the response. CT suggested adding the many benefits being received from their membership.	SM
	Possible Funding 2026/2027	
	- <u>Creative Scotland</u> Application submitted for the Autumn Festival. Decision expected mid-July.	SM
	- <u>Ward Discretionary Fund and CGF</u> for directional signage will be progressed once the architect’s quotation is received this week.	SM
	<u>Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE)</u> - CT asked if some support could be given. SM is meeting with HIE to revisit potential funding following a previous enquiry.	SM
	<u>CLLD</u> An application for the AHF to be submitted.	SM
	<u>NHI</u> - GK asked about this fund. Possible projects were discussed: reprinting maps; attending VisitScotland Connect (partner with others to promote town year-round); QR plaques for BID’s event calendar/home page; Photography and social media content creation. It was agreed to apply for photography.	SM

	CB and JJ to follow up on discussions with Peter re. access to his event photography and John White re photography support for free. Shopfront Grants & Accessibility. No update from the Ward Manager re. HC fund. GD had notification from HC re ramps/handrails going in at HC's units at the Station Business Park. SM to ask HC Estates Office if that is connected to BID's ask last year. Other possible funding. SM to revisit the list shared earlier in the year.	CB/JJ SM
Marketing	NEW Website and Social Media activity/report. EC created a simplified reporting format. CB asked for comments. GK suggested a one-page summary and for figures to show monthly, incremental progress. JJ asked if analytics for the Events page could be included. SM asked if visits to members listings could be tracked. CB said there may be capacity to look at this at the end of the year. Website reporting - The figures for the META campaign were very good, with a 7.6% click through rate, well above average. The clicks, engagement rate and PPC were very good. GK suggested that future reports state what the 'norm' is. The spring META campaign captured new visitors, up 5.7%. The page views and engagement rate had gone down due to new audiences spending less time on the website in this 'discovery' stage. The META Campaign for the Autumn Festival is starting soon to take advantage of staycations. New webpage quote. CB shared a quote for a new, 'Business for Sale' page, which could include domestic properties. Non-members could pay to be on the page. The Board approved expenditure for CB to progress.	CB CB
Signage	Visitor Map Boards. "You Are Here" map boards are being installed this month. SM thanked JJ and Kate Robertson from keeping the dispensing units topped up. Retail/Business Park Signage. All businesses that responded to the email are supportive of the new designs. SM to meet Architect to agree exact location on Castle Street for the directional signs and then applying for funding. NEW Events Calendar. SM would like to see more promotion of this webpage. QR codes could be placed at reception areas/til points. GK asked if all event organisers are all giving BID their events. SM will email all again with a reminder to share events. JJ to share the Cathedral Calander of events. The American Highlander. SM spoke with Jason who is very happy to visit Dornoch weekly and film BID businesses FOC! Most of his 45k You Tube followers are in the USA. SM will promote the opportunity in the Newsletter on first come first served basis. Jason is also offering to provide media training for young people. He would like to create a 'Far North Tourism' channel which Dornoch would be the hub for.	SM SM SM/JJ SM
Events	Spring/Autumn Highland Festivals. A survey on the SHF to find out what worked well/could be improved, along with asking for autumn programme dates, has been sent out. GK asked how the Cookery Demo went. SM said a last-minute £30 META advert led to numbers doubling! Strong attendance reported at several events but the autumn festival seems to be more popular. Neil Hampton has agreed to discounts being offered again golf fees for the spring and autumn festivals. Hogmanay 2026. CT reported strong progress with Lesley Strang. The Distillery will launch a bottle much sooner with a view to raising £6.5k. It's likely the event will cost £16k. It will be the same as last year and some changes next year. Whisky Festival. The DWF has almost sold out. 30 exhibitors expected along with big locals (Balblair, Dalmore, Glenmorangie, Clynesh etc). Marketing and timetable being progressed. ML offered to host the final dinner. CT said the RDGC have been fantastic and have given great support, providing the venue rent free.	SM CT

“Regulatory issues”	Non-Domestic Rates Revaluation meeting. GK updated the Board on the BID members meeting with the Assessor. The Assessor set out how the revaluations were arrived at. In the draft valuations the Assessors had classed whole of Highland area as high demand. In the second revaluation they downgraded all areas, due to the number of complaints, except for Skye, Inverness Aviemore and Dornoch, which were left as ‘High Demand’. The new rates demand is the rate demand for all individuals unless all individually complain. Evidence is needed to show that Dornoch really is seasonal. GK sent a FOI asking the Assessor what evidence they used to class Dornoch as a high demand area. GK asked RDGC for the seasonality figures over the last 3 years. The stats highlight there are only 5 months when they are over 10%. SM is gathering evidence on opening hours etc. Second Homeowners Council Tax. GK advised the Golf Club that the BID would do training to help set up a STL in Dornoch if there is a demand for that.	GK SM
7) Membership Matters/Communications/Meetings	Member/Stakeholder Updates: Highland Coast Hotels. SM met with Clare Armstrong, Group Development Manager. Positive discussions were held regarding collaboration on BID’s festivals and with the town businesses/event organisers. VisitScotland. SM met with Jason, VisitScotland Destination Manager. Very helpful meeting for investigating bigger opportunities for the BID and members. Cruise Liner Opportunities. Gary Cruden facilitates the ‘Royal Dornoch Tours’. The Cathedral, Museum and businesses involved are keen to attract more cruise ship visitors/tour operators. Curated itineraries are being considered. BID has been asked what support it can provide e.g. Ambassadors, maps, tour contacts. CB noted previous positive engagement with the Port Authority and emphasised the importance of developing clear offers/itineraries, supported by marketing materials for tour operators. Discussion included developing a wider “Dornoch package” for promotion at trade shows and through tour operator networks. SM noted this could form part of a broader visitor offering. SM to suggest to Gary that a meeting with the new Cruise Manager/interested businesses to progress the opportunity.	SM
AOB	BID Marketing support. Social media and website updates are going very well thanks to the in-kind support. Going forward it is estimated there will be 1.5 days per month required. BID have been asked if they can contribute anything towards this following the trial. Board to discuss further. Timings of Board meetings. CT proposed that the Board meetings move to daytime. It was agreed that the meetings will be held at 10am on the first Thursday or the month (or Friday, subject to Gareth’s availability). SHF Banner. Banner at Nigg roundabout to be taken down. Visitor signage near school. SM asked if the sign should be updated. CB suggested to look at this as part of a broader signage project, as per the signage audit. Christmas/Winter lighting and Fair - JJ asked to discuss this at next meeting. Shop Front Grants. GD asked to add this on the next Agenda, along with other possible funding listed at the start of the year.	CB SM

Date of next meeting – 10am, Thursday 4th June, Dornoch Hub