

MINUTES, DORNOCH BID BOARD MEETING.
10am Thursday 6 August 2026

In Attendance: Claire Bruce (CB), Ginny Knox (GK), Neil Hampton (NH), Jo Johnston (JJ), Colin Thompson (CT), Kathryn Collinson (CC), Sharon Mackay (SM).

Apologies: Robert Smith (RS), Gareth Dixon (GD), Matt Logie (ML).

Welcome: CB introduced and welcomed KC who started her new role with Dornoch BID this week.

ITEM	DISCUSSION NOTE	ACTION
Matters/Actions arising from last minutes -	Dornoch Town Wi-Fi. SM advised that the Wi-Fi is now reinstated but the signal is not strong on the High Street. HB not launching until it is right. GK shared that Embo House now has Starlink which removes the need for cables. SM to share that with off grid members and to ask Highland Broadband for update on launch date.	SM JJ/SM
	Town Tidy (TT). Cancelled due to bad weather and a new date to be agreed. Pat Munro Ltd. to provide chips for 4 tree bases along the front of The Jail/Dornoch Castle area. CT offered to provide a couple of staff. SM to contact other premises nearby for help. A retainer will need to go down, and CB suggested asking J&S Gunn for help to deepen each area.	SM
	New Planters at Retail Park - CB advised there is some money in the 'Flowers and Fairs' pot for possible new planters, but the issue is flower provision/watering. JJ suggested a FB post is done, thanking the Flowers and Fairs group for all they do and asking for more volunteers to support their work. GK suggested Alison Barlett may have greenhouse space for additional flower planting. CB to liaise with Vicky.	CB
	'What's On' posters. 500 posters printed thanks to sponsorship from the RGC and RDGC. highlighting the AHF and DWF.	
	The American Highlander. Three excellent videos have been shared, featuring BID members thanks to Jason, on his American Highlander You Tube channel. KC to upload the videos to BIDs 'You Tube' channel and to speak with Jason about adding Dornoch into the title, is possible of the various editions.	KC
	Waste & Recycling Group Purchasing Survey. SM advised the results show demand for a group purchasing arrangement. NH advised that Northern Recycling started doing two pickups p/w since last week. SM to engage with waste providers to assess potential savings/service options via a group procurement approach.	SM
	We Are Dornoch (WAD). GK advised that approval has been given for WAD to be a sub-committee of DADCA. JJ, CB and GK have been progressing this. Terms of Reference (ToR) to get signed off by DADCA. WAD as a subcommittee of DADCA will enable Charity status and any money raised will be vat free and, in time, benefit from gift aid. Invites to go to the CC, DADCA, DACIC and BID for representation on the WAD committee. Decisions about what crowdfunding activities and how to share the funds for the good of the town on events and beautification initiatives, will be the focus of the group. GK hopes it will be ready to launch at next Town Tidy. Initial funds could be used to provide small plaques to promote WAD and the QR code. CB asked should WAD provide promotional support or should the information be given to businesses to promote WAD in their own way. The challenge with the latter is relying on businesses to do this. NH asked what the message is and advised it needs to be a short, catchy elevator pitch. 'Enjoyed your time in Dornoch? Help us to keep it looking great!' is one possible idea. Once the message is agreed, businesses can decide where to display it. The message needs to be quickly grasped, whether on websites/desks/email receipts. GK asked NH for formal feedback to help work out the approach.	GK/CB/JJ
	Adoption of minutes. Proposed by GK and seconded by JJ.	

Finance -	Monthly report and Forecasting. Bank balance: £42,560, majority on deposit. GK suggested looking at a secondary bank account for better interest e.g. Wise, Monzo Starling. Year-end accounts to be re-printed as JJ advised accountants that the BID owes no corporation tax. This has been confirmed and year end accounts to be signed by GK. John Wright to be paid for regular photos at cost of £150 p/m. Grant funding remains essential to deliver planned projects. SM's fee is to change based on CK being now being appointed. In terms of Governance, considering the Highland Games, for clarity JJ advised that the Bank Statements are shared to show tax being paid to HMRC, and bank statements for cash flow figures. GK and GD have access to the accounts. GK asked for more detail on what each spend is specifically for. JJ encouraged Directors to ask if they have any questions about the finances. SM asked should have an AGM. GK said it's not a requirement and CB said we have our All-Member annual meeting. JJ to send the confirmation of the VAT payment of £11k to all directors via email. NDR Levy/Opt In Member Updates: <u>-Opt-in Members</u> – No new members this month. SM has drawn up a list of 30 possible businesses to contact. <u>-NDR Members</u> - Only a couple of changes with self-catering property owners but no new businesses. Capaldi's has closed. SM to contact Links House regarding help with promoting the property on the new BID properties page. Possible Funding 2026/2027 SM updated the possible funding streams table and gave an update: <u>Creative Scotland.</u> – AHF application unsuccessful due to insufficient detail on delivery partners, budget breakdown and risk management. BID can re-submit. KC to progress. <u>Ward Discretionary Fund and CGF.</u> SM submitted funding request for £5,900 to each of these possible funds for two on-street signs and two entrance signs at the Station and Meadows Business/Retail parks. One on street sign includes 'Parking 100 yards. The quotes include installation, planning, design and manufacture. The applications have gone to HC's Policy6 email address, as advised by the Ward Manager. <u>HIE.</u> Three applications for online bookability, a video showcasing Dornoch year-round and a request to have a grant to provide digital support to members has been unsuccessful. Funding cannot be provided in advance for the BID to operate its own digital fund. The video was a great idea but couldn't fund due to difficult and competitive budgetary conditions for revenue projects, this is not a project that would meet our threshold due to the low cost and ROI for economic outputs. SM to contact re previous reference to possible help for the SHF 2027. HIE suggested contacting VS. GK applied to VS before and numbers are too small. CT to share HIEs funding link. KC suggested that the digital survey template SM shared with her, could include a question to gauge the need for website/digital support which could be used as evidence there is demand. <u>NHI</u> It was agreed that CK is to apply to for the Autumn Highland Festival for marketing support. CB advised that the 'Sutherland Pride and Place' fund will get £90M over the next 10 years but Dornoch is not eligible to apply. They feel it is a rich area. CB advised there is a Sutherland County Committee, chaired by Cllr. Gale which BID could apply to. SM to speak with Cllr. Murray for clarification.	JJ JJ/GK ALL JJ SM SM KC SM KC KC SM
Marketing	Website and Social Media activity/report. CB advised that year on year, over the last 2 years, there has been a 13% uptick in total visitors and new visitors due to META campaigns. Month on month there is a bit of a drop and that is because more blogs, fresh content, organic traffic from socials is needed. CB advised that CK had training on google analytics and will look at that and refresh the report. KC advised that the EC reports are great but top level and she will start providing stats in more	KC

	detail e.g. what people do on the website such as clicking to book/look at other content. Also, KC will monitor traffic to every listing and the event page. She will also ask what key stats members want. GK had a one page set of KPIs that would help in the website reporting. KC has that and will include in report. CK added that a search function is needed and a list with the categories as a better way of directing searches on the website. Ian to look at that. CT asked if videos can be added. These can be added on member's own listings and also on the new You Tube channel but not hosted there. KC advised there is no reference to Dornoch on the American Highlander's video titles. KC to get an e-intro and look into that possibility. SM advised member's videos were shared regularly on stories although had not been able to monitor the reach. The NC500 membership includes and annual infographic of what has been delivered in terms of reach. CB said that reposting stories can be checked by members. Important that the full list of members and CB said to tag. KC to progress and talk with members about these opportunities. Property for sale webpage. SM has advised all members about the page and has all the agents details ready to share with KC. KC to progress to build the page. Proposal for a Dornoch Gift Voucher Scheme. SM contacted Oban who advised they sold £10k of vouchers last year. SM hoped to contact 6 of the larger BID employers to ask what they might spend on staff vouchers, if a 'Shop Local Dornoch Gift Voucher' scheme was piloted. GK said that Oban has a population of 8k whereas Dornoch has 1,800 and felt the effort wouldn't bring much ROI. There was discussion around a digital voucher but concerns around time to administer. JJ suggested an extra £1 could be added to any sale for WAD. Agreed to promote the gift cards available at present. SM/CK to progress. CT suggested a 'Dornoch Club'. There is a Legends Club/Whisky Club. Eg Whisky Club members have access to a heavily discounted event between 9 Jan – 13 Feb. Free accommodation if guest spends £100pp each day on F&B. Driving Footfall Through Digital Heritage Trails. To be c/fwd.	KC KC KC KC SM/KC
Events	Autumn Highland Festival. SM has completed the programme and KC is working on the listing and social media. A Ceilidh is taking place in the social club and JJ suggested that as the other room is available FOC, it could be an opportunity for selling tables or a tastings/workshop type event. SM to advise BID members of the opportunity which could draw more people there at night. CT advised that Dornoch Jocktober Fest is something being looked at for 2027. DWF – CT advised that most of the events are sold out and has no concerns that the tickets remaining will sell closer to the festival. Hogmanay 2026 – CT discussed concerns around policing the town following the issues that happened in town after the Sutherland Show and the Dornoch Music Festival. The events were well managed but going forward CT feels more thought has to go into how the town is managed. Not only is there an issue with drink but drugs. Dornoch is very much a tourism town and with the location of the events being in the town, when these people leave the events where do they go. CT has arranged a meeting Gary Cameron, Licensing Officer, SM and Cllr Murray to discuss concerns. Christmas Lights and Fair/Winter Lighting Trail. JJ is to contact Cath MacAngus and she has started to get some possible volunteers for it.	KC SM CT/SM JJ
"Regulatory issues"	Non-Domestic Rates Revaluation. GK advised the date is now passed to appeal the 'High Demand' classification. Several members advised SM they have submitted appeals and asked that GK is thanked for the template shared and FOI details.	

	Short Term Let Control Area (STLCA). GK advised this is moving quietly along. A consultation closed in June about putting Highland Rural, which includes Dornoch, into a STLCA. GK noted that when filling in her STL renewal it states that if you are in a STLCA, then when you apply for your new license, you're asked if you have been operating for 10 years or more? If not, businesses must apply for a certificate of lawfulness for your property to become/remain a STL. GK advised that BID needs everyone to get their applications submitted asap before we possibly go into a STL area. SM wondered what the change is to STLs in the Strathspey area, pre and after the introduction of the STLCA. JJ suggested contacting Cllr Murray. GK said it is not clear when the decision will be made. Expected up to be 9 months consultation and then to be approved or not by the Scottish Ministers a further 9 months later. Tourism Visitor Levy Update. GK advised that the works on that carries on. SM has shared Mr and Mrs Redfern's concerns around the impact the TVL could have on their sector, which represents 26% of the overnight stays according to Visit Scotland, with the one North BID member on the Council's Industry roundtable group.	SM
Membership Matters/Communications/Meetings	Member/Stakeholder Updates: -Highland Council Meeting – SM met with Cllr. Murray and Ward Manager, Fiona Richardson to discuss various, ongoing issues. Overflowing bins, drain clearing needs, weed control and street furniture maintenance were included. Cllr Murray advised that the double yellow lines are going in soon and asked that the BID inform members when this is to happen. KC to add parking locations to the shopping section on the website. - Town and Country Lettings – SM shared the Board's decision re the map and Dawn emailed to say thank you for discussing the matter and that she would inform her clients. SM reminded Dawn about the opportunity to advertise on the visitor map. - Commercial Waste Collection – The owner of Knockbreck House contacted SM asking for help in addressing missed bin collections over 3 weeks! SM contacted the Ward Manger to address asap and continued to monitor the position.	SM KC SM
AOB	Rates Rebate – CT advised that the Hotel got a rebate on the £45,000 payable of £18,000 which is a good result. Coul Links Decision - GK said that next week is the last week before the Scottish Ministers decide. All interested parties are to put in papers by next Friday. GK expects that there may be a decision before Christmas. Dornoch Gatherings – JJ said that she and SM had been discussing how only a very few BID members reshare posts either about DG or BID posts. JJ said that if everyone re-shared a post, even once a week, it would make a great difference with all the followers they each have. KC to progress. Networking date – The BID is working with Royal Dornoch Golf Club and the Armed Forces Covenant team to develop an event highlighting how local employers can support veterans through the Armed Forces Covenant and Employer Recognition Scheme. SM suggested that the next networking event should be held in October, with CB recommending early October to help support promotion of the AHF. SM also suggested involving BID member Chris Minty MBE, CEO of Selvana Ltd and an RAF veteran, who supports veterans through woodland creation and conservation. His involvement could provide a valuable local perspective on the subject. SM to progress discussions with Chris and partners and confirm the event arrangements.	KC SM

Date of next meeting – 10am, Thursday 3 September 2026.