

DADCA

New Build Project
- Big Lottery Bid -

Feasibility Study (Update)

October 2013

DORNOCH & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

Scottish Charity No. SC013716 - Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland No. 375856 - Registered Office: Rubhan Beag, Hilton, Dornoch, Sutherland, IV25 3PW

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1. Executive Summary

Dornoch & District Community Association (DADCA) is a volunteer run Charity which owns and manages Dornoch Social Club, the largest and busiest community hall in the town.

This project is concerned with building a new Community Centre to replace the Social Club, a building over 150 years old and not fit for purpose for our growing community.

The proposed new building will bring together DADCA's 50 affiliated groups and organisations, the Dornoch Highland Gathering and the Dornoch Football Clubs on one community owned site in the heart of our town.

The new building will be designed in such a way as to be accessible to all, and be particularly inclusive for our elderly residents, many of whom have age-related disability issues and who find it difficult (or impossible) to use the existing building.

The proposed development site, Meadows Park, is currently in community ownership via Trustees and offers plenty of additional space for future expansion if required. DADCA has already secured a long-term lease on an adjoining field (The Glebe Field) which means that the provision of green-field recreational space in Dornoch is assured for decades to come.

We believe that DADCA needs to develop a new Community Centre now because:

The current building is too small and not fit for purpose

Evidence : Public Survey Results (Consultation Document)

Evidence : Groups Survey Comments (Consultation Document)

Evidence : Disability Access Survey (Options Appraisal Page 20)

There is demand for hires which we currently can't meet owing to lack of facilities

Evidence : Public Survey - Fitness Suite (Consultation Document)

Evidence : Groups Survey (Consultation Document)

The current building is not sustainable in the long term in its current form

Evidence : Energy Audit (Options Appraisal)

Evidence : Structural Survey (Options Appraisal)

The current building cannot be economically upgraded or renovated

Evidence : Structural Surveys (Options Appraisal)

Evidence : Energy Audit (Options Appraisal)

DADCA has over 5 years experience of running our existing building successfully

Evidence : Business Plan

DADCA has the resources, skills and commitment to organise and run a new building

Evidence : Business Plan

DADCA has the full backing of our community for the project

Evidence : Consultation Document

DADCA has secured a viable site which has support from the Planners

Evidence : Options Appraisal

We have been working hard for the last 5½ years on the background for this project, and we are now ready to proceed as soon as we can attract the support of a major funder.

2. Purpose of the Document

This document outlines the case underpinning the plan of Dornoch and District Community Association (DADCA) to develop a new Community Centre to replace the existing Dornoch Social Club, an asset owned by DADCA which would be sold to raise funds for the new build.

The original Feasibility Study for the project was produced by Phillips Aitchison Consultants in 2009, work paid for by DADCA and part funded by a LEADER grant. For reasons detailed overleaf the project was subsequently put on hold until late 2012, and when our application for funding from Investing in Ideas was rejected (our project was not deemed to be a 'new' idea) we decided to complete the requisite documentation in-house to save money.

In creating this document we started from the 2009 base point, but it was most enlightening to see how much had changed in the intervening period. Most of the changes have been positive (new legal structure, ownership of the building, more experience running the hall, much greater use of the building, etc.) but the underlying problem of having a hall which is not fit for purpose remains, and the need for it to be replaced is more urgent than ever with our already expanding population and a minimum of 190 new houses to be built in the next decade.

This document is one of seven supporting our case, as follows :-

Document	Authors	Date
Feasibility Study	Phillips Aitchison Consultants	2009
Feasibility Study (Update)	DADCA Board (this document)	2013
Options Appraisal	DADCA Board	2013
Building Surveys	Various	2008-12
Consultation Document	DADCA Board	2013
Business Plan	DADCA Board	2013
Planning & Design	DADCA Board	2013

The documents are all available in electronic format if required.

3. Recent History (Post 2008)

Following the forced closure of the Social Club due to a Dangerous Building Notice having been served on it, a totally new committee was elected in **February 2008**.

Our first job was to take stock of what we were left with, which was a decrepit and virtually derelict hall (originally built as the school in 1851) 'leased' from the Trustees, a few hundred pounds in a bank account and no visible means of income (there had been just one paying event in the hall in the previous 12 months)!

The new chair called our first committee meeting in the cold and damp hall on the basis that if we didn't use the hall for our own meeting we couldn't expect others to do so for theirs! A decision was taken to spring clean the place using volunteer labour. The main hall floor was cleared of hundreds of pieces of chewing gum then sanded and varnished, walls were painted and old, broken furniture was skipped.



The Cleanup Team - March 2008



Gents Toilets (with boarded up Window)

The next decision was what to do with the place - we thought there was a will within the community to use the hall, but wanted to find out exactly what they required. We designed a questionnaire and embarked on our first Community Consultation (although we didn't know then this is what it was called!). The results of the survey (*see Consultation Document pp. 4-5*) confirmed that the community were largely behind us and gave us an idea of what they needed from the building.

By the **end of 2008** the hall had been patched-up, was in regular use for meetings and some new events had started (Moira Chisolm had established a Pilates group which still meet on a Thursday morning). We also held some fund-raising events - the Games Night Dance of 2008 was a sellout and generated some much needed cash.

Our survey had revealed a majority in favour of leaving the Social Club for a new build somewhere in Dornoch, and so we applied for a grant from LEADER to help fund a Feasibility Study. The application was successful and following a tendering process Phillips Aitchison Consultants were appointed to undertake the work at a total cost of £5,000.

In **July 2009** we were fortunate to be offered a Disability Access Survey by the Sutherland Access Panel at reduced cost. This was duly delivered (*see Options Appraisal - Appendix A*) and confirmed what we already knew - the building was far from ideal for the elderly or infirm! Access into the building is up a steep cross-slope, car parking is limited (although we have since marked out a disabled parking space), the doorways are too narrow for unassisted wheelchair use, the disabled toilets are simply not fit for their stated purpose, the internal lighting is poor and the building is on two levels requiring steps up/down.

The Feasibility Study was published in **October 2009**, and a well attended public meeting saw a possible new building design unveiled by Graham Phillips to an enthusiastic response. DADCA was fired-up and ready to move on to the next stage - whatever that was!

In **November 2009** we were again fortunate to receive a virtually free survey of the Social Club, this time an Energy Audit from Community Energy Scotland, provided under their CARES scheme. This report concluded that there was little or no opportunity to fit any renewable energy system into the hall owing to its design and to its location within the conservation area (thus restricting any changes to the south-facing facade where solar panels would need to be fitted, for example).

This was another indicator that a new build was a better solution to our problem, but in **late 2009** we were successful in securing our first Awards for All grant of nearly £10k. This was used to upgrade the hall in 3 significant areas - painting the external woodwork (windows & doors), new floor coverings in the coffee lounge, corridor, toilets & kitchen, and finally to buy new kitchen units & appliances which were fitted into a gutted and refurbished kitchen space using volunteer labour over the Christmas holidays.



Before



After

The kitchen was officially opened in **January 2010**, when Jim McGillivray, our local councillor, stepped in for the snow-bound Alison Magee (ex chair of Big Lottery). Soon after the refurbished kitchen was opened a new coffee morning group (The Third Way) was formed and began to meet in the hall on a weekly basis.

The new kitchen also allowed us to start Car Boot / Table Top Sales on a Saturday morning as a regular fund raising event, at which we still serve our now famous bacon baps. The revamped kitchen is also used regularly by our Indoor Bowlers (twice a week), the Art Group (who meet for 3 hours on a Wednesday in the Struie Room) and by a host of other coffee mornings and meetings requiring refreshments. We have also hosted a small number of weddings - all of which was made possible by combining the Awards for All grant with a healthy dose of volunteer support.

A weakness identified in the original feasibility study, and later confirmed by speaking to Big Lottery personnel at forums such as the National Village hall forums in Aviemore & Birnham, was that our constitution and legal structure (i.e. a registered charity but an Unincorporated Association) would require updating if we were ever to own buildings or land. Accordingly, we contacted OSCR for advice and subsequently changed our legal structure to a Charitable Company Limited by Guarantee on **April 1st 2010**, starting with a total of 9 directors.

As part of our on-going discussions with other local halls and voluntary groups, we had a number of meetings with the Dornoch Academy Parent Council and the Rector of Dornoch Academy (John Garvie), who had well developed plans to build a much needed new Sports Hall at the Academy to serve their expanding school role. Amongst other things, we discussed with them the possibility of a joint venture but they were adamant that their plans were so advanced and space was at such a premium that this was not feasible.

In fact, we eventually received a request to hold off on our own plans for a new Community Centre so as to not adversely affect their chances of securing the missing funding for their project. After some discussion the DADCA Board agreed to this request, and decided to concentrate our own efforts on strengthening the Board of Directors instead.

In **early 2011** we became aware of a new quality scheme for village halls (Keystone) run by SCVO and took a decision to work towards this award. We nominated the 3 newest Directors at the time to form a sub-committee for this purpose, and in September 2013 we had our initial inspection prior to applying for the final award qualification. This has required a significant amount of work from the volunteers involved, but has resulted in a much more robust Board with self-regulating systems and policies for governance now in place. However, the Board were becoming frustrated by the lack of progress on the Sports Hall (the project was growing arms & legs, with costs having escalated from the original £300k to over £1.5m) which was delaying our own plans for a new Community Centre.

In **June 2011** an Industrial Unit on the Dornoch Retail Park was placed on the market by Highland & Islands Enterprise (HIE). We took a decision to try and buy this unit as an Annexe to the Social Club, with the idea of creating a Fitness Suite (much requested by the community) and to provide additional meeting & activity space to take the pressure off the Social Club.

A closing date was set not long after the building had been advertised, but in a very short space of time we gathered widespread public support for the idea and developed a robust business plan to submit with our proposal. We offered to rent the building for one year (at their asking price of £7,000 + VAT) to give us enough time to raise the listed sale price of £55,000 + VAT.

To our great disappointment our bid was not successful, and we later learnt that the building had been sold for just £50,000 + VAT to a retailer who opened a third convenience supermarket in the town!! We wrote letters and met with HIE on two occasions to try and discover where our bid had failed, but never received a satisfactory answer. However, it was during the development of the business plan that we first became aware of the Big Lottery Growing Community Assets funding stream, and realised that this may be a way to secure significant funding for our main priority - the new build project.

As well as keeping up with the demands of running the increasingly popular Social Club and being involved with fund raising activities such as Car Boot Sales and the Dornoch Gallery, at the end of 2011 our new Treasurer suggested we approach the Trustees of the building to ask them to sell it to us rather than renewing the lease. This was a long process, but in **September 2012** DADCA eventually became the owners of the Dornoch Social Club, thanks in no small part to the *pro bono* work done by our solicitor Nigel Jones of MacKenzie & Cormack in Tain.

As part of our due diligence in this process we contracted a structural survey from a professional building surveyor (partly funded by a grant from the Dornoch Common Good Fund) and a separate timber survey of the building. The results of the structural survey, carried out by HGA Consulting Engineers, Inverness (*Options Appraisal - Appendix C*), confirmed the conclusions reached by S.C. Mackintosh Chartered Surveyor in 2008 (*Options Appraisal - Appendix D*), that the building requires substantial renovation work to correct slippage affecting the end gable wall of the Struie Room (an extension to the building added in 1885). However, the good news from the Timber Survey was that we do not have any rot or woodworm in the building!

In **January 2013** the DADCA Board decided the time was right to resurrect the new build plan and launched a new public consultation to check the public were still with us. At the same time confirmation was obtained that the preferred site for the new build (Meadows Park) would be available from the Trustees, and that the Planning Department had no objections to the proposed development.

In under 6 years the Social Club has been transformed from an unused derelict building to an integral part of the fabric of Dornoch social life. It now hosts over 800 events per year, supports five sub-committees involved in volunteer work, and we now have over 60 volunteers inputting an estimated 3,500 hours of unpaid work per year for the community.

4. DADCA - The Organisation

Dornoch and District Community Association is a member organisation open to individuals resident in the IV25 postal district, and to clubs or organisations active in the area.

4.1 Mission Statement

Dornoch and District Community Association's twin aims are: to establish and maintain a community building in Dornoch; and to help promote and encourage voluntary groups and individuals active within the Dornoch area.

4.2 Legal Structures

Dornoch & District Community Association (DADCA) is a registered charity with OSCR (No. SC013716) and a Company Limited by Guarantee registered in Scotland No. 375856.

We hold a current Public Entertainment Licence for the hall from Highland Council.

4.3 Governance

We are governed by Articles of Association and have a comprehensive set of Policy guidelines by which we govern on a day to day basis. Copies of all these documents can be viewed on our website www.dadca.org.uk.

We are working towards achieving the Keystone Quality Award from SCVO for village hall management, and have had an initial inspection from our local officer.

4.4 Directors

A Board of Directors (maximum 15) is elected annually at the AGM in June. The Board then elect a Chair, Vice-Chair, Treasurer & Secretary from within their number, and meet monthly.

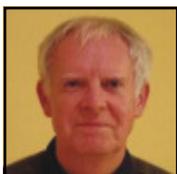
Following is a list of current directors with brief biographies.



Jerry Bishop - Chair

First Elected - 2008

Retired Company Director with over 20 years experience of the Computer Aided Design industry in Scotland. Recent work in Building Design and Development. Post Graduate Diploma in Management Studies. Keen cricketer!



William Sutherland MA - Vice-Chair

First Elected - 2009

Former naval officer, community partnership manager & teacher. Now retired, has strong involvement in voluntary work, with Rotary, ex-Service charities (SAAFA), local Heritage Society and East Sutherland's Council for Voluntary Service (CVS). Chartered Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development and holds an MA in English.



Patrick Murray MA, ACA - Treasurer

First Elected - 2010

Chartered Accountant - Retired. CEO/CFO/COO with wide experience of both financial and general management, in both large corporations of excellent repute and small entrepreneurial businesses, in the UK and internationally particularly in the Far East. MA Philosophy, Politics and Economics.



Judith Sutherland DIP ED, DRSAM, CCNA - Secretary **First Elected - 2008**

Teacher/lecturer in music at primary, secondary and tertiary education levels in Scotland and England. Edexcel and OCR A level examiner specialising in music IT. Community Councillor for Dornoch area.

**Pat Murray - Bookings Secretary****First Elected - 2008**

Retired. Background in finance, law & art journalism. Charitable work includes Macmillan Cancer, also Director of DACIC & Dornoch Allsorts.

**Jill Barnes****First Elected - 2011**

Trained at the Royal School of Needlework. Member and exhibitor with the Sussex Guild of Craftsmen for over 20 years. Runs own business creating bespoke children's clothing. Volunteer for Marie Curie cancer care.

**Effie Grant****First Elected - 2008**

Experienced child development and play worker, trained support worker for the elderly and vulnerable. Includes a raft of accreditations in these areas plus food handling, computer literacy and First Aid.

**Aimee Kruger****First Elected - 2013**

Student Nurse in 2nd Year, current position part-time a Care Assistant in a local nursing home, works as part of a multidisciplinary team.

**Mark Macauley****First Elected - 2013**

Owns and runs a football coaching company in the Highlands. Held positions as Pastry Chef, Customer Service Specialist along with accredited footballing roles as Community Coach, Head Coach and Regional Talent Squad Head Coach. Most recent work has all been working with children aged 18 months through to 18 years old.

**Carol McKay****First Elected - 2012**

Manager Bank of Scotland, skills include people management, goal/target focus, customer service excellence, problem solving, communication, personal and colleague development. Community focused.

**Vicky MacKenzie****First Elected - 2012**

Runs and owns photography business specialising in children's portraiture. PADI Scuba instructor managed scuba dive centre for 5 years. Managed Liquid Lens Thailand's leading Underwater Digital Imaging academy Qualified nursery nurse, child carer in UK and USA. Also has retail and customer service experience.

**Jimmy Melville****First Elected - 2011**

Junior porter at Dornoch railway station, RAF air traffic controller in UK and far East, British Aerospace air traffic control in Lancashire, Construction worker at Nigg. Ran own Insurance broking business for 25 years. Community Councillor and all round good egg!

**Terry Robinson MBA****First Elected - 2011**

Army Officer - retired. International Business Development consultant, project manager and sales director for British Telecom. Worked with NTL, General Dynamics and Sony.

**Suzie Sutherland****First Elected - 2013**

Currently Financial Controller at Capgemini ; past roles Internal Audit Manager at Scott-Moncrieff ; Internal Auditor at RBS. Honours degree in Accountancy. Skills and experience include Internal Auditing, Risk Management, Financial Accounting, Management Accounting, Financial Reporting and Analysis, Project Accounting, People Management.

4.5 Membership

DADCA currently consists of over 350 personal members (latest list on website at www.dadca.org.uk) and the 51 affiliated groups or organisations listed below.

Organisation	Representative
DIGIT - Craft Workshops	Alison Patterson
Dornoch Academy PC	Brian Fraser
Dornoch Allotments	Rachel Jack
Dornoch Allsorts After School Club	Jerry Bishop
Dornoch and District Christian Fellowship	Donald Goskirk
Dornoch Angling Club	Ernie Millard
Dornoch Area Community Council	Jimmy Melville
Dornoch Area Community Interest Company	Joan Bishop
Dornoch Bowling Club	Barry Watson
Dornoch Cathedral	Susan Brown
Dornoch Cathedral Guild	Sheila Duncan
Dornoch City AFC	Russell Mackenzie (Jnr)
Dornoch Craft Guild	Sally Wild
Dornoch Curling Club	Ian Mackay
Dornoch Farmers Market	Sarah Whealing
Dornoch Festival Week	Marlene McKay
Dornoch Firth Group	John McMurray
Dornoch Flowers & Fairs	Judi Sutherland
Dornoch Free Church Youth Clubs	Mark Robinson
Dornoch Heritage Society	George Munro
Dornoch Highland Gathering	Willie Mackay
Dornoch Hogmanay Street Party	Yvonne Ross
Dornoch Lochans	Malcolm MacGillivray
Dornoch Primary School P C	Ailie Aitchison
Dornoch Rainbows	Gail Mackay
Dornoch Scottish Country Dance Society	Jimmy Melville
Dornoch Seniors Indoor Bowling Club	Paul Holligworth
Dornoch SWRI	Scilla Aitchison
Dornoch Youth Cafe	Yvonne Ross
East Sutherland Athletics Club	Jenny Currie
East Sutherland Rescue Association	Vanessa Williams
Hatha Yoga group	Amanda MacRae
Historylinks Museum	Peter Wild
Jan Trumble Dance	Jan Trumble
Kim MacKenzie Dance	Kim MacKenzie
Macmillan Cancer Support	Barbara Morrison
Meadows Nursing Home	Jackie Mackenzie
North Highland College UHI	Russell Rekyh
North of Scotland Craft Fairs	Mike Neale
Perfect Paws Canine Club	Pip Whitelaw
Pro-Motion Fitness	Julie Brown
RC Parish of Christ the King	Deacon Kenneth Bromage
Royal British Legion	Innes Matheson
Spinners Group	Sally Wild
St. Finnbarrs Episcopal Church	Caroline Dallman
Standfast Dance	Kim MacKenzie
Sutherland Agricultural Society	Marie Hay
Sutherland Caledonian Pipe Band	Gillian Sutherland
Sutherland Pilates	Moira Chisholm
Taoist Tai Chi Society	Kath Hunter
Third Place Coffee Club	Marian Swanson

Membership subscription levels are set by the members at the AGM and are currently free for both personal members and affiliated groups, although it is envisaged that this will change when we open our new building.

4.6 Volunteers

DADCA is run entirely by volunteers, as are its sub-committees. No record is kept of the actual number of volunteers or the hours that they input per year, but the following list of volunteers and estimate of their input shows the level of commitment and support that DADCA receives from the community.

Group	Volunteers	Number	Hrs/annum
DADCA	(Directors as per previous pages)	14	2000
	Moira Chisolm (Membership Sec)	1	50
Dornoch Cinema	Annie & Ernie Millard	8	380
	Richard & Joan Easson		
	Stuart & Sue Gardiner		
	Fiona MacDonald & Mark Fraser		
Arts & Crafts Guild	Peter & Sally Wild	5	300
	John & Mary Luckie		
	Margaret Hood		
Flowers & Fairs	Kathleen & Russell McKenzie	18	250
	Ian & Maureen Mackay		
	John & Kathleen Gunn		
	Barbara & Sandy Morrison		
	Billy & Patsy McKay		
	Steve Farquharson, Sue Helal		
	Liz & Ian Henderson		
	Denise McBride, Trish Weekes		
George & Joyce Maclean			
Youth Cafe	Aimee Allen	1	150
Festival Week	Cath McAngus, Jen MacBeath	7	280
	Dyanne Hercher, Louise Irving		
	Marlene Mackay, Ailee Aitchison		
	Russell McKenzie (Jnr)		
Tennis Club	Rachel Jack	1	40
Car Boot Sales	Hazel Cameron, Jeanette Bremner	5	120
	Catherine Dallman, Betty Rutherford		
	Sarah Whealing		
Dornoch Fireworks	Johnny & Yvonne Ross	7	40
	Aileen & Davy Andrew		
	Mike & Kirsteen Allen		
	Grant Mackay		
Totals		67	3,610

The above is by no means an exhaustive list and apologies to those missed off!

5. Dornoch Social Club Building

The Social Club building dates back to 1845, when the original rectangular building (comprising the Main Hall and Coffee Lounge) was built as a school. The present 'L' plan appearance was created when an extension (the Struie Room) was added in 1885 to form an additional classroom with living accommodation for a school teacher above.

In 1979/80 the rear extension was added to create new toilets (replacing the old external ones), a kitchen, store cupboards and a new 'Green Room' alongside the Main Hall.

When the school relocated to its present site on Evelix Road in 1913, the Building was gifted to the people of Dornoch and put in the control of a board of Trustees comprising the Town Clerk, the Town Provost and the Town Sheriff.

For many years the building was operated as the Men's Club and contained snooker tables in the Main Hall. Thereafter a committee was formed (later becoming the Community Association) and the local Scout troop occupied the Struie Room almost exclusively until it disbanded in the 1990's.



The building was closed down by the Council in 2007 because of an unsafe chimney stack on the gable end of the Struie Room (see photo above, right), and although this was repaired by local contractors (thanks to a grant from the Common Good Fund) the incumbent committee decided to step down *en bloc*. A new committee was formed at an EGM in February 2008, and four members of that original group remain as Directors in 2013.

Initially, one of the most time-consuming jobs for the committee was to find out who the Trustees of the building were, given that the positions of the nominated appointees no longer existed and the previous committee had had little or no contact with them since the 30 year lease was signed in 1980! Once the delegated Trustees had been established, consent for them to transfer the asset to the Community Association (once it had become a Company Limited by Guarantee) was sought and granted. The sale was eventually completed in 2011.

The building has little space around it except for the front (south) elevation where there is a car park for about 10 cars. Development options are outlined in the Options Appraisal Document, but these options are limited by the fact that it is almost land locked and it sits within the Dornoch Conservation Area as defined by Highland Regional Council in 1974 (although it is not a listed building).

There is a strong emotional attachment to the building from within the local community, particularly as it has historically been used for youth dances, birthday parties, ceilidhs, etc.. However, the results of our various consultations show that the community are now almost unanimous in their wish for a new Community Centre to be built and the Social Club sold on to a new owner.

6. Dornoch - The Place

The following information, produced by EKOS Limited for the Dornoch Economic Masterplan document commissioned by HIE in 2013, is reproduced with their kind permission.

6.1 People

Dornoch area has an estimated population of around 3,800 which equates to 2% of the Highland total. Based on the mid-year population estimate for 2011, Dornoch has experienced an increase in population of 11.1%, increasing from 3,419 in 2001 to 3,800 in 2011. This percentage increase was significantly higher than both Highland and Scotland.

Population

	2001	2011	% change
Dornoch	3,419	3,800	11.1%
Highland	208,920	222,370	6.4%
Scotland	5,064,200	5,254,800	3.8%

Source: SNS

However, analysis by age group shows some interesting results in terms of where the growth has taken place.

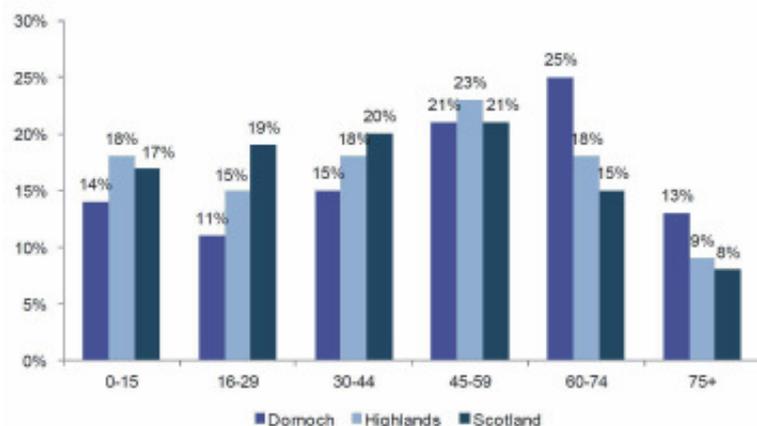
Population Age Groups

	2001	2011	Absolute Change	% Change	% Split of 2011
0-15	570	543	-27	-5%	14%
16-29	405	436	31	8%	11%
30-44	594	567	-27	-5%	15%
45-59	790	811	21	3%	21%
60-74	687	951	264	38%	25%
75+	373	492	119	32%	13%
Total	3,419	3,800	381	11%	100%

Source: SNS – Mid-year population estimates

Over the period from 2001 - 2011, there have been some notable changes in the composition of the population of Dornoch, specifically in the 60-74 and 75+ groups, both of which have experienced large increases. There has been a decrease in the 0-15 and 30-44 groups. These types of changes have implications in terms of the availability of working age population and an ageing population which may impact negatively on the services within the local area, putting more stress on health and care services for the elderly. It is worth noting that those who are aged 60 and over comprise nearly as large a share of Dornoch's population (38%) as those aged between 0 and 44 (40%).

Figure 6.1 (right) details the age proportions of Dornoch compared to Highland and Scotland.



The only age ranges in which Dornoch has a higher proportion than either Highland or Scotland are the 60-74 (10 percentage points more than the Scottish average), and 75+ groups (5 percentage points higher than the Scottish average). It should be highlighted that two groups which fall within the working age category - 16-29 and 30-44 year olds - are below the national and local authority level; this is coupled with the future working age group (0-15 year old) also being below both the local and national level.

6.2 Deprivation

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) provides small-area analysis (data zones) to identify and rank deprivation across Scotland. This operates on a scale of most deprived (ranked 1), to least deprived (ranked 6,505). The SIMD examines seven domains: Employment, Income, Health, Education, Access to Services, Crime, and Housing.

There are six SIMD defined data zones which comprise Dornoch. Some of the key insights which can be drawn from the latest (2009) SIMD data include:

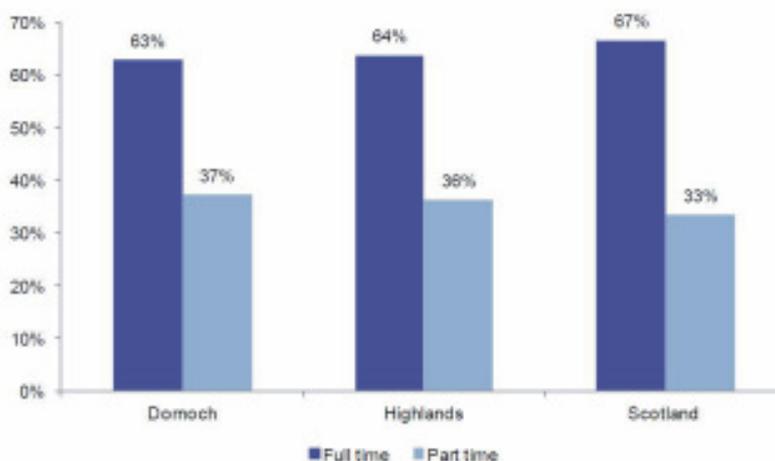
- none of the data zones rank in the bottom 50% of the most deprived areas. The most deprived of the six data zones in question sits at 50% - the halfway point between most and least deprived;
- Dornoch scores very well in terms of crime (three data zones in the least deprived 5%) and education (two data zones in the least deprived 10%); and
- the area does however score poorly in some indicators – **with four data zones in the 5% regarded as the most deprived in terms of access to public transport – two of which sit in the worst 1%.**
- The health zone is ‘statistically significantly worse’ than the Scottish average in four indicators, including: **Road traffic accident casualties**, Patients (65+) hospitalised after a fall in the home; and People living in the 15% most ‘access deprived’ areas.

6.3 Employment

As of 2011 there were a total of 1,051 people employed within Dornoch after experiencing a decrease of 13% since 2008. Accommodation & food services was the largest employer accounting for 35.5% of the workforce in Dornoch, followed by education, construction and retail.

Just less than two thirds of employees within Dornoch are employed on a full time basis (63%) similar to the Highland level but lower than the Scottish level.

Figure 6.1: Full Time and Part Time Employment



6.4 Services

Transport and Infrastructure : Dornoch is located approximately 43 miles from Inverness, and 62 miles from Wick, and can be accessed from the A9 (approximately 2 miles). The town is not particularly well served by public transport. The nearest train station is in Tain (approximately 9 miles away), which is served by the Inverness – Thurso/Wick line. There is a semi regular bus service (Inverness to Thurso) which passes through the town, and can be used to visit several other local towns (Golspie, Tain, and Brora, for example). These buses are hourly (in both directions) on weekdays, although services are less frequent at weekends. There is also a light aircraft strip to the south of the town.

Retail/Service Profile : There are a number of retail and business services in the town including:

- bars, restaurants and cafes;
- convenience stores;
- hotels and B&Bs;
- post office and high street bank; and
- a range of retailers, such as gift shops, butcher, chemist, and florist.

There is a healthy array of independent retailers in the town, and they provide residents and visitors with most of the services that they may require on a day-to-day basis. The number and range in part reflects the important role of tourism within the town. The town also hosts a farmers market, typically monthly.

Community Facilities : Dornoch also offers a selection of public services to residents and visitors, including a police station, library, and health centre, as well as both a primary and secondary school. The library is open 5 days a week (closed Thursday and Sunday) and runs a weekly 'Book Bug' session for babies and toddlers, and their parents/carers. There is also a cinema facility which operates at Dornoch Social Club, which runs monthly throughout the year. Guests can either pay a small fee per film, or an annual subscription fee.

The Dornoch Social Club also offer a vast array of classes on a weekly or monthly basis, including fitness classes, art groups, and youth group /meetings.

6.5 Summary

- an increasing population (larger growth rate than Highland and Scotland) but growth has been in the older age groups;
- only age ranges where Dornoch has higher proportions than Highland and Scotland are 60-74 and 75+;
- implications for local services particularly health and care but also an issue in relation to transport given the issues around access to public transport;
- working age group and those under 16, proportions are below the Highland and Scotland averages;
- low unemployment and benefit claimant rates;
- school pupils performing very well and high staying on rates;
- in terms of deprivation the only indicator where Dornoch performs poorly is public transport access;
- in health terms Sutherland South performs well in terms of life expectancy but not in terms of road traffic accidents;
- not particularly well served by public transport, and there is no railway line (nearest station 9 miles away in Tain (south) or Golspie (north));

7. Relevance to Development Plans

Dornoch has recently been the subject of a Town Planning exercise, the Dornoch Economic Masterplan, sponsored by HIE and produced by Ironside Farrar, Edinburgh.

Highland Council also have a local development plan which was published in 2010 and is under review at the time of writing this report. A new submission regarding Meadows Park has been made by DADCA.

7.1 Dornoch Economic Masterplan.

DADCA were consulted by the authors prior to publication of their report, and representatives attended several meeting, both 1:1 with the planners and group sessions (held in the Social Club) with other local organisations such as Community Council (CC), Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC), Royal Dornoch Golf Club, North Highland College (UHI), etc..

Amongst the Priority Plan Action Points where DADCA are listed as a lead player is :

PP36 : Support the Development of a Community Centre in Dornoch

This constitutes:

- Local community to pursue development of a community centre
- Include options for multipurpose facilities i.e. Fitness Suite, IT rooms
- Establish a viable framework for future use of the current Social Club

Indicators of Success:

- Fully developed community centre for Dornoch that benefits those who live, and wish to visit.

The proposed development is fully consistent with the above Priority Action Point.

7.2 Highland Council Local Plan

The Highland Council Local Plan for Dornoch was published in June 2010. The preferred site for development is contained within area C1 on the map (*see Appendix A*) with the following note attached.

C1	4.2 Ha	Meadows Park	Site maintained for community and associated uses. Potential for development of community centre subject to suitable access, landscaping, siting and design. Local consultation on these matters will be undertaken prior to the submission of a detailed planning application. Connection to public sewer required.
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The proposed development is fully consistent with the above note to the Local Plan, and has been further endorsed by the Planners in their response to our Pre-Application planning enquiry 13/02296/PREAPP on 28/8/2103 (*see Planning & Design Drawings document : Appendix B*).

8. Compliance with Funding Criteria

The proposed project meets many of the outcomes and requirements set by National government and individual funders.

8.1 Big Lottery : Growing Community Outcomes

The proposed project clearly meets all 4 of the outcome criteria laid down by the Big Lottery Growing Community Assets funding stream.

Outcome 1 : Communities work together to own and develop local assets

Over 50 local voluntary organisations are uniting under the DADCA umbrella to develop a new community centre on land already in community ownership.

Outcome 2 : Communities are sustainable and improve their economic, environmental and social future through the ownership and development of local assets

One of the reasons to build a new community centre is to make sure that it is economically viable (which the current one has proved to be) and environmentally sustainable (which despite our best efforts the existing one is most definitely not). The land and building will be community owned and run for the betterment of the people of Dornoch.

Outcome 3 : Communities develop skills and knowledge through the ownership and development of local assets

We have already gained a great deal of experience in the 5½ years we have been running the Social Club. We have encouraged over 60 volunteers to help in their community, and a new building will give even more people the opportunity to get involved and learn new skills.

Outcome 4 : Communities overcome disadvantage and inequality through the ownership and development of local assets.

The SMID data shows that our residents are in the bottom 5% in Scotland with regards to access to public transport. The same report also reveals that our residents are adversely deprived with regard to Road Traffic Casualties - often attributed to the high mileage incurred by residents in remote communities.

Our project will help overcome these disadvantages and inequalities by providing a service which is already used by many local residents in their own community rather than them having to travel. Our survey revealed 148 people that are currently using a Fitness Suite outside Dornoch, and thus having to incur additional costs and extra risks to access such a facility.

A new Community Centre with Fitness Suite will give local residents the same chance to keep fit and enjoy a healthy lifestyle as other people in the country.

8.2 National Government Outcomes

The Scottish Government National Performance Framework was refreshed in December 2011. Of the 16 outcomes identified in the framework, our project will have a positive impact on eight of them, as follows.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 2 : We realise our full economic potential with more and better employment opportunities for our people.

Scores of construction jobs will be created during construction, these are much needed in the area as the local employment market lags the national recovery rate. Once open, a minimum of one full-time (equivalent) permanent job will be created with opportunities for training and skills development. Additional volunteering opportunities will also be created by a new hall.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 6 : We live longer, healthier lives

A new fitness suite in Dornoch will encourage more people to access this type of facility and so become healthier. Our fitness instructor has plans to offer individual fitness programmes, based in the Fitness Suite, for patients referred to her from our local Medical Centre. This is particularly relevant in view of our high percentage of elderly residents.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 7 : We have tackled the significant inequalities in Scottish society

The fitness suite will give local people access to facilities currently only available to car owners. The additional space in the new hall will increase the choice of events available to local residents. A new hall will be accessible to all - removing the current inequality regarding elderly and disabled people accessing the Social Club. The Dornoch Cinema has already proved that our community can provide facilities previously only available by journeying to Inverness (80 mile round trip).

NATIONAL OUTCOME 10 : We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need.

*The existing hall is NOT well-designed for community use, is NOT sustainable and is NOT accessible by all members of our community. A new hall will be designed to address **ALL** these problems.*

NATIONAL OUTCOME 11 : We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others

DADCA has identified the need for a new building, has generated significant public support for the project and will lead the community in realising their goal of a new community centre.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 12 : We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect it and enhance it for future generations

The project will enhance the built environment by replacing 3 eyesore buildings at Meadows Park with a new community centre & storage facility designed to blend into its locale and guarantee the presence of green-field recreational space in the heart of our community for several generations.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 14 : We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production

The new building will be much more energy efficient and better insulated than the present one. It will also use a renewable energy heating system using locally sourced fuel and will benefit from the advantages of passive solar gain by design, thus reducing the carbon footprint of the community centre.

NATIONAL OUTCOME 16 : Our people are able to maintain their independence as they get older and are able to access appropriate support when they need it.

With Dornoch's higher percentage of its population in the over 60 bracket, many of our residents are unable to access the existing building (and thus services e.g. indoor bowling, Arts & Craft Guild, Cinema, etc.) due to its design and location. A new community centre will give these residents the same chance to access services as everyone else within the community. This will help them maintain their independence longer.

In addition to helping meet the Scottish Government national outcomes, our project will also help meet the Sport Scotland No. 1 headline outcome (in partnership with Local Authorities) of providing 'More opportunities to participate in sport within schools & the wider community'. The open spaces surrounding the building will provide future opportunity to consolidate other sporting facilities (e.g. Tennis Court, MUGA) adjacent to the building.

9. Summary of Project Benefits

The new Community Centre and Community Storage buildings will directly benefit the following people and organisations.

Local Residents : the existing hall is already used to almost full capacity. A new hall will benefit local people by offering more space for more activities, catering not only for today's proven demand but also for the additional burden accruing from our expanding population in the future. The new hall will particularly benefit those elderly and infirm residents currently prevented from using the Social Club owing to the deficiencies outlined by our Access Survey.

Visitors to Dornoch : Dornoch has a buoyant tourist trade which provides the majority of our employment opportunities. Visitors to the town currently attend the Social Club for regular events such as the Car Boot Sales and Cinema screenings, but also for the annual events such as Festival Week, St. Andrews Fair, Fibre Fest and the Book Fair, which all attract additional visitors to the Town. The Dornoch Economic Masterplan identified these types of events as offering significant potential to attract more visitors to Dornoch (PP16), thus boosting the local economy.

The Masterplan also identified other Priority Action Points (PP's) relevant to DADCA; scope for additional Weddings (PP23), Spiritual Tourism (PP24) and Academic Tourism (PP25) all of which would benefit from a new hall with modern catering and conference facilities.

We will continue to work closely with DACIC and other agencies to deliver on the above Action Points.

DADCA : The Community Association, its 50 affiliated groups and over 350 members will directly benefit from having a sustainable community centre accessible and available to all. We will be better able to meet the existing demand for community space, deliver on more of the needs identified by our community in our two surveys and expand the range of services and facilities which we can offer.

Festival Week : Festival Week will directly benefit from a new community centre at Meadows Park by having considerably less set-up time thanks to the nearby community store, access to better toilet facilities (currently portable toilets left by Highland Gathering) and a wider range of indoor spaces in which to organise their events.

Youth Cafe : For reasons of space, the Youth Cafe is currently restricted to one session per week. Having a bigger room than at present which can be used at the same time as the Main Hall, they will be able to open more regularly and so meet the evident demand from our local youngsters. Having adequate storage capacity within the hall will mean that they can offer a wider range of activities at their sessions.

Flowers & Fairs : The main asset of the Flowers & Fairs group is their car and bowser. Currently they have no secure accommodation for it. A new community store will provide this as well as removing the need to drive down to the Golf Club to re-fill the bowser, thus saving time and money.

Arts & Crafts Guild : The Arts & Craft Guild will directly benefit from the re-opening of the Dornoch Gallery in a new hall, as this will provide a cost-effective outlet for their work. They will also benefit from having running water and clean-up facilities in the new activity room. Crucially, their members will be able to directly access the toilet facilities at the same time as other users are in the Main Hall.

Dornoch Cinema : The Cinema will benefit greatly from having retractable seating and proper black-out facilities in the Main Hall. These facilities will reduce their current set-up time from 1 hour to a few minutes, and thus they will be able to show more films to more people in more comfortable surroundings.

Attendees at their showings (locals and visitors) will be able to watch films in more comfort.

Highland Gathering : The Highland Gathering will benefit from the project in a variety of ways.

- Their set-up time (and thus costs) will be dramatically reduced due to the new community store being much more accessible (i.e. by a forklift).
- The new viewing gallery will also save time and money as it will not require temporary seating planks or tarpaulin coverings.
- The new building will provide enough permanent toilet facilities for the day, removing the need to hire portable toilets.
- The new hall will provide an on-site wet-weather solution for the dancing competitions, if required.
- The changing facilities will provide athletes changing facilities (there are none at present).
- The additional seating spaces in the new stand will provide an additional income opportunity.
- The kitchen will provide an hygienic food preparation facility for the provision of meals for volunteers.
- The car park will provide disabled parking spaces on the day (there are none at present).
- The field drainage will be improved as part of the project, which would prevent a repeat of the cancelled event in 2010.

The above benefits will help sustain this important social event, which has significant cultural and historical significance for the town.

Dornoch City Football Club : Although choosing to retain their own changing rooms, the new fitness suite will be available to their players, and the modern changing facilities will offer additional possibilities regarding junior football coaching (girls and boys) on Meadows Park.

Dornoch Academy : School children are regularly transported by the Academy minibus to attend the fitness Suite in Golpsie. Being able to access a fitness suite in Dornoch would benefit them by reducing their travelling time, reducing the cost of their transport and reducing their carbon footprint.

East Sutherland Rescue Association : As reported in their survey response, volunteer members of our local in-shore rescue association will use the new Fitness Suite to maintain the fitness levels of their crew.

Royal Dornoch Golf Club : As a world class Golf course (currently rated 14th in the world) RDGC will be able to offer access to a Fitness Suite to its visiting players. This type of facility is expected by professional and leading amateur players and will improve the attraction of the course to visiting players.

University of Highlands & Islands : The facilities of a new Community Centre (particularly the Fitness Suite) will enhance the attractiveness of the Dornoch Campus of UHI for incoming students, and provide additional facilities for them when resident in, or visiting, Dornoch.

In summary, this project will benefit every part of our local community - young and old, residents and visitors - and every type of interest - academic and recreational, sporting and artistic alike.

