

DORNOCH & DISTRICT COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

**FIVE-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN FOR A NEW
COMMUNITY CENTRE IN DORNOCH**

April 2026



Revision History

Revision	Release Date	Details	Released By
V1.0	2 nd April 26	Final Business Plan issued	Maclean-Yuille Consultancy

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Executive summary

1. Dornoch and District Community Association (DADCA) has commissioned Maclean-Yuille Consultancy, Orkney Business Consultants Ltd and architect Jimmy MacDonald to produce a business plan, funding strategy and fully costed building design for a new, flexible, energy-efficient and larger Community Centre in Dornoch.
2. For 45 years, the Dornoch community has used a 180-year-old building located in Dornoch's conservation area as the town's main venue for events and activities. Known as the Social Club, the building, which was formerly Dornoch Academy School, has served the role of a town hall despite not having been built for that purpose. The Social Club plays a vital role in the community, with typically between 50 and 60 bookings each week. It has been owned and managed by DADCA, a charitable company, since 2012.
3. Dornoch has bucked regional trends and is the only community in Sutherland where the population is growing, and this trend is expected to continue. The town also has a flourishing commercial sector, including new housing developments and plans for a multi-million-pound distillery and visitor centre at Dornoch South, where the new Community Centre will be, which has emerged as an important and strategic location for the town. However, the vibrancy of the commercial sector has not been matched with similar growth in community facilities, with local people now feeling "left behind" with limited access to suitable spaces and facilities for meetings, social events and cultural activities.
4. The biggest challenge, recognised by the DADCA board, is that the Social Club is at the end of its useful life. Despite being busy, the building is expensive to run, has limited parking, poor accessibility and is too small for many community events. Critically, the Social Club loses money on an annual basis (£14,534 in 2024/25) and requires significant further investment, estimated at a minimum of £10,000 each year over the next 5–10 years just to keep the building safe and operational.
5. Having assessed all options – including renovating the Social Club, which formal studies show as unfeasible – the DADCA board knows the situation is now untenable. There have been several determined efforts over many years to build a new Community Centre backed up by extensive community engagement, consistently showing strong support for the project. However, the lack of a suitable site and funding constraints proved insurmountable to progressing these aspirations.
6. But things have now changed. DADCA has achieved significant project milestones, indicating that, at last, the project shows real potential to progress. Crucially, it has now secured and expects to realise around £1 million towards the project, over and above consultancy and architect's costs already incurred, comprising: a

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£280,000 grant from the Dornoch Common Good Fund; £387,000 from the sale of five of the six affordable housing plots; £250,000 from the successful sale of the Social Club; and a further anticipated £85,000 from the sale of the final housing plot.

7. It has appointed a professional project team, including an architect, a quantity surveyor and consultants to prepare this business case and secure the remaining funding.

8. A fully costed conceptual design, with an estimated build cost of £1.8 million has been prepared.

9. The new centre will be more than twice the size of the existing Social Club and will provide a modern, energy efficient facility with flexible rooms allowing several events to run at once. It will have a modern kitchen, retractable seating for lectures and cinema, and soundproof retractable partition to maximise flexibility.

10. The purpose-built centre will allow existing clubs to expand, and new events to start - particularly concerts and music events for which there is local and regional venue demand. It will stimulate a range of community and environmental benefits, including opportunities for learning via new classes and activities, helping reduce social isolation, providing a sustainable base for existing and new user groups, low-carbon heating and significantly reduced energy costs.

11. Extensive community engagement over several years consistently shows high levels of community support for a new centre. This culminated in a community ballot in March 2026, delivered as a mailshot to 17600 households, attracting 703 responses with 603 (85.7%) supporting the proposal for a community centre at Dornoch South.

12. The financial projections reflect increased community bookings, larger events, and lower running costs, resulting in a positive and sustainable outlook for the new community centre. Income is projected to grow from £32,739 in Year 1 to £49,618 by Year 5, with a surplus generated each year, demonstrating strong financial management and capacity for reinvestment.

13. A draft project implementation plan has been developed, setting out targets for the next two years. Key milestones include the submission of a planning in principle [application](#) submitted in March 2026, development of the funding plan, the tender process for construction and estimated project completion towards the end of 2027.

1. Background and Context

Dornoch and District Community Association (DADCA) has commissioned Maclean-Yuille Consultancy, Orkney Business Consultants Ltd and architect Jimmy MacDonald to produce a business plan, funding strategy and fully costed building design for a new, flexible, energy-efficient and larger

Community Centre in Dornoch. The new facility will replace the 180-year-old social club building, which despite considerable investment and maintenance, can no longer meet the needs of a modern and growing community. Originally constructed as a school, the social club has served as the community's main venue for events and activities for more than four decades, but it is now at the end of its functional life.

The business plan follows a feasibility study, produced by the same project team in October 2025. That study assessed community demand, economic and social benefits, financial feasibility, strategic fit, and potential risks. It examined alternative options, including refurbishment and redevelopment of the existing Social Club. The findings of that study provided a robust, independent evidence base, which concluded that continued use of the Social Club building was not sustainable, and the only viable option for Dornoch is for a larger, purpose-built community centre.

This business plan sets out:

- The challenge and proposed solution.
- Community involvement: local engagement, the benefits and impact of a new centre.
- How the centre will be run.
- Project timeline.
- The financial viability of the new centre in the first five years.

1.1 The Challenge

Dornoch – a growing community

For 45 years, the former Dornoch Academy School, built in 1845 and located in the town's conservation area (DCA1) as defined by The Highland Council, has served as Dornoch's main venue for local events and activities. In that time, Dornoch (**Figure 1**), which is situated around 41 miles north of Inverness, has changed significantly. Its population, now more than 1,600 people has bucked trends and has grown rather than declined. This growth is expected to continue, driven by new housing estates including Deans Park and Sutherlands Park to meet, as set out in the Sutherland Local Plan 'the expansion needs of the community.'

The commercial sector is flourishing with developments, including plans for a new eco-distillery and visitor centre and a £13.9m Clubhouse at the Royal Dornoch Golf Club. The tourism market is also thriving, with Dornoch attracting thousands of visitors each year.

Figure 1: Map showing the location of Dornoch



However, despite this growth, which undoubtedly brings certain community benefits – a study commissioned by Royal Dornoch Golf Club shows golf tourism adds around £5m to the local economy every year - DADCA recognises that suitable facilities for local community groups have not kept pace. As a result, local people have been “left behind” with limited access to suitable spaces and facilities for meetings, social events and cultural activities.

The Social Club – a building of the past, not the future.

The main challenge facing DADCA is the age and condition of the Dornoch Social Club (**Figure 2**). Three separate building and condition surveys have raised consistent concerns about its long-term suitability as a community facility.

Figure 2: Dornoch Social Club, located in the former Academy School building, built in 1845



Survey Findings

- 2008 Building Survey: highlighted that the building required 'considerable care and maintenance'.
- 2009 Disabled access Report (Sutherland Access Panel): Found that access to the Social Club was poor – in some cases dangerous – and falling well below minimum standards. While some recommendations were implemented, many could not be addressed without major structural works.
- 2010 Energy audit: Led to improvements such as added insulation. However, DADCA is unable to take advantage of renewable technologies, including solar PV and a heat pump, because of the building's age and its location in a conservation area where planning restrictions apply.

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Although DADCA has made several improvements, including a new kitchen, improved lighting, and partial window replacement, the building's age and condition mean that significant further investment will still be required to keep it safe and operational. Based on the past five years, this is estimated at a minimum of £10,000 per year over the next 5–10 years.

This includes:

1. Major periodic works: pointing, woodwork, eaves, soffits, and internal redecoration, averaged at £3,500 per year.
2. Regular annual maintenance and repairs: day-to-day upkeep and minor fixes, estimated at £6,500 per year.

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In addition, the south side of the building requires underpinning.

Over the past two decades, several determined efforts have been made to establish a new Community Centre in Dornoch, with each consultation demonstrating overwhelming local support for the project. Furthermore, responses from five separate community engagement exercises—conducted in 2009, 2013, 2015, 2019, and 2025—have consistently highlighted residents' concerns about the current building's limitations and its suitability as a community facility.

The Feasibility Study (October 2025) summarised the key issues as follows:

Table 1: Key Issues with the current social club building

Challenges	Implications
Location	Poor accessibility and limited car parking. The building is at the top of a very steep drive – presenting health and safety issues - and is also situated in a designated conservation area. Specific consents may be required for works to the building. This may place a limit on potential refurbishment work. Furthermore, even if planning permission were possible any

Challenges	Implications
	expansion to the building would be constrained due <u>to</u> the size of the site and its location on a steep hill.
Limited parking facilities	Only 10 spaces.
Maintenance Costs	High and rising, particularly for heating and repairs.
Capacity (Figure 3)	Too small for larger groups or events. Restrictions on weddings, concerts, theatre productions, and cinema screenings. Only small-scale, low-key events possible.
Facilities (Figure 4)	Outdated décor and basic amenities, including limited toilet facilities.

Figure 3: Main Hall at the Dornoch Social Club



Options ~~to~~ either to refurbish the Social Club or for a new build on the same site have been fully explored but ruled as unfeasible due to:

- The location and footprint of the building do not allow for expansion.
- Current parking and access issues would not be improved.
- Retrofitting old buildings can be expensive, particularly because the Social Club is in a conservation area, ~~energy efficient measures such as solar PV would not be permitted.~~

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The combined negative effects of an old building, poor design and high running costs mean the Social Club loses money. The latest accounts (31

March 2024) show a deficit of almost £15,000. Donations have played a key role in sustaining operations, totalling £5,863 in 2024 and £38,934 in 2023. Since 2022, an individual donation has provided support towards running costs; however, this funding has now stopped, leaving the Social Club financially unsustainable in its current form.

The DADCA board knows that the situation is now untenable and that for the Social Club cannot continue as a meeting, activities and events space for the people of Dornoch. ~~in the long term it cannot be sustained.~~

Figure 4: Social Club has limited toilet facilities which can only be accessed via the main hall.



2. The Solution

2.1 Overview

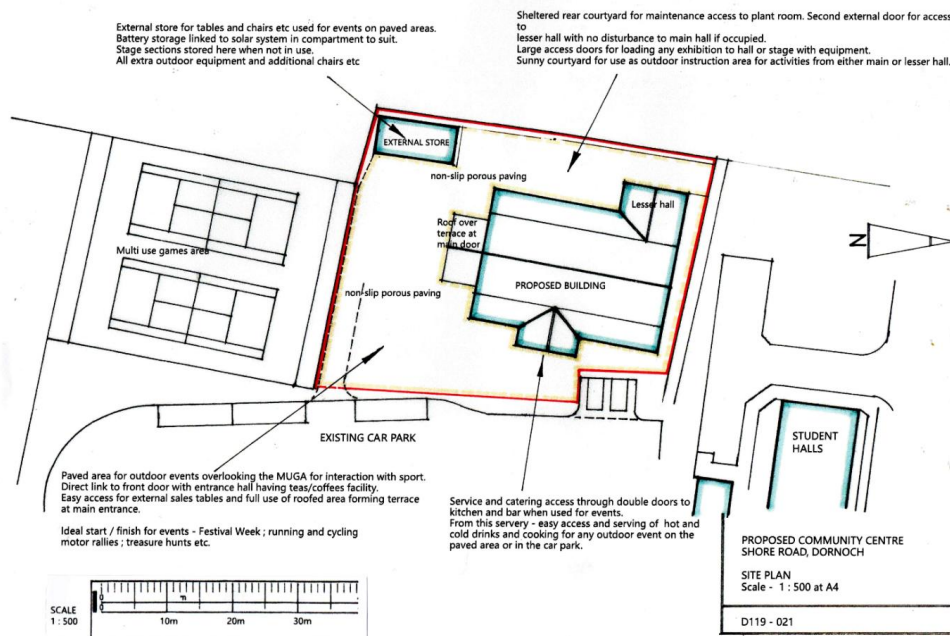
After fully examining all potential options over several years, the most viable and future-proof solution is to develop a new Community Centre on community-owned land in central Dornoch. It is also the option which, from multiple rounds of community consultation, has consistently received high levels of support.

2.2 Site and Location

The new Dornoch Community Centre will be located at Dornoch South (**Figure 5**), on land that is currently owned by the Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC). The land will be transferred to DADCA for a nominal sum of £1, ensuring that the facility remains under community ownership and long-term local control. The site is adjacent to the community-owned Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) and sits within a growing hub of community and economic activity.

Dornoch South is already emerging as a strategic location for development. Recent investment includes the MUGA (opened in 2024), expanded parking facilities delivered in 2022 — including coach spaces that reduce congestion in the town centre — and student accommodation for the University of the Highlands and Islands. In addition, plans are progressing for the multi-million-pound eco-distillery and visitor centre, to be located at Dornoch South, which will further increase local footfall and economic activity. These developments make Dornoch South an ideal location for the new Community Centre.

Figure 5: Map showing the preferred site for the proposed community centre



2.3 Key Features and Facilities

The proposed Community Centre (**Figure 6**) represents a major upgrade in space, functionality, and flexibility compared to the existing Dornoch Social Club.

The fully accessible building will provide modern, accessible, and multi-purpose spaces to support a wide range of activities including meetings, fitness and wellbeing sessions, youth groups, performances, exhibitions, and larger events such as weddings and concerts.

Enhanced facilities, improved circulation, and adaptable layouts will allow multiple activities to take place simultaneously, strengthening both community engagement and financial sustainability.

Figure 6: Architect's drawings showing East and South Elevations of the new community centre



Key features include:

1. A 233 sqm hall, almost twice the size of the main hall in the current Social Club with seating capacity for 160.
2. Retractable seating for lectures and cinema.
3. Meeting room with separate kitchen facilities and toilets
4. Soundproof partition allowing for flexible use.
5. 54sqm kitchen with servery hatch
6. Improved storage

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2.4 Comparison with Existing Social Club

The new facility will deliver a major increase in overall capacity. Table 2 highlights the key differences in size and layout, demonstrating how the new design enhances flexibility and enables a wider range of community and commercial activities.

Table 2: Comparison with existing Social Club and Proposed Community Centre

Facility	Existing Social Club	Proposed Community Centre	Improvements
<u>Main Hall divided by moveable partition into Main Hall and Cinema/Lecture Theatre</u>	118 sq. m	233 sq. m	Double in size; accommodates larger audiences and a wider range of activities (concerts, cinema, sports, events). Retractable seating and soundproof retractable partition.
<u>New Struie Room/Lesser Hall</u>	47 sq. m	45 sq. m	Similar in size but designed for multi-purpose use; improved layout and access. Separate toilet facilities and an area for serving refreshments.
Kitchen	29 sq. m	54 sq. m	Fully equipped commercial-standard kitchen with internal and external serveries; supports catering and event income.
Coffee Lounge/Entrance Hall	48 sq. m (coffee lounge with raised section)	44 sq. m (multi-use space)	Reconfigured for flexibility: usable for small events, art displays, receptions, or breakout space; direct access to a covered south-facing terrace.
Storage	20.2 sq. m on ground floor (plus limited upper-floor storage with restricted access)	58.4 sq. m across three stores + 8 sq. m cleaner's store + 60 sq. m external event store	Substantial increase in storage capacity; improved accessibility and direct links to hall, terrace, and car park.

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The floor plan (**Figure 7**) shows how each space has been designed to support a wide range of uses, from everyday community activity to larger scale events.

Together, these design improvements represent a significant enhancement over the existing Social Club. The doubling of the Main Hall size, expanded storage, and professional kitchen create new opportunities for income generation and community use. Improved accessibility, energy efficiency, and flexible room configurations ensure that the new centre will meet the diverse needs of Dornoch's residents for years to come.

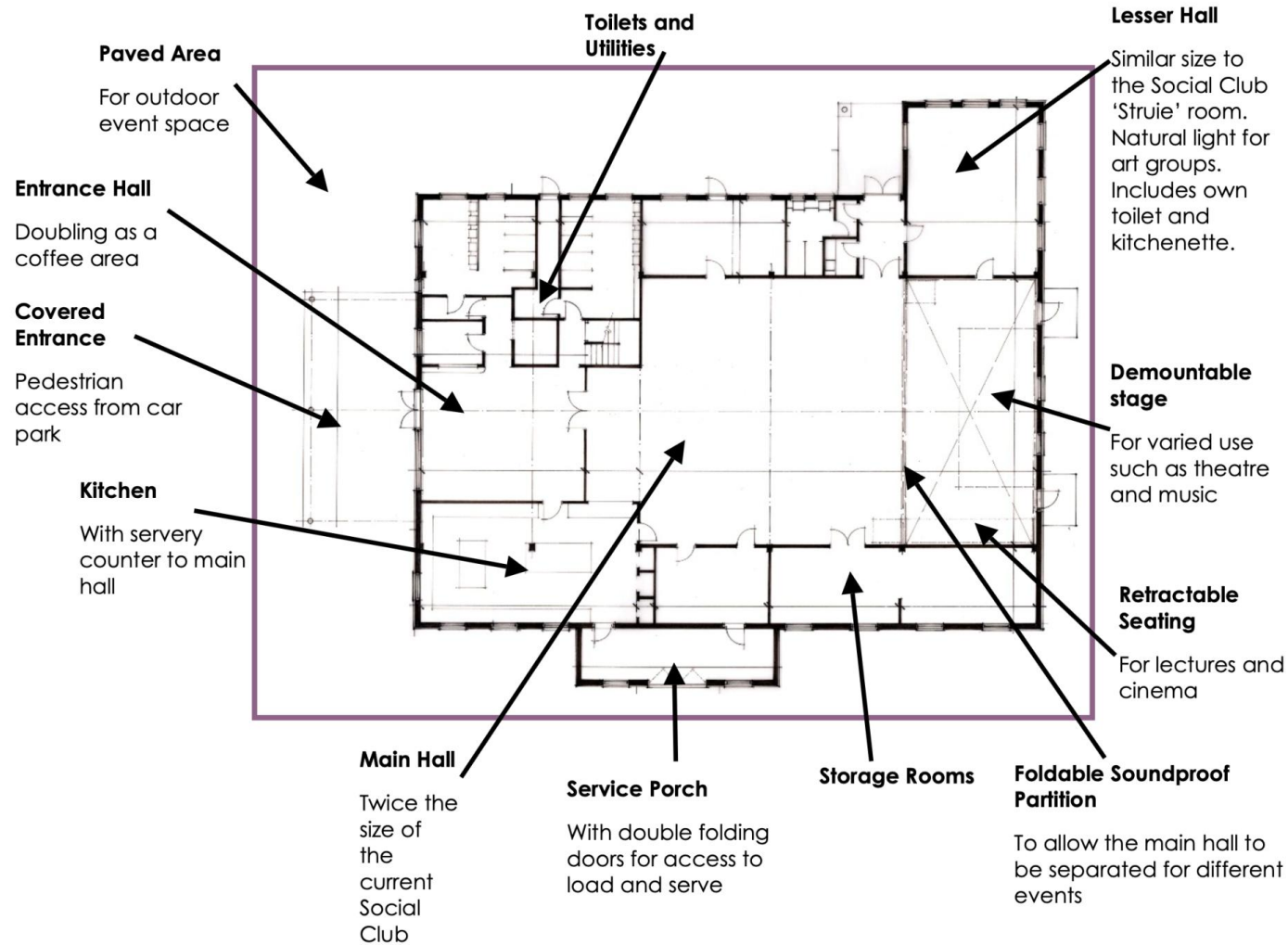
2.5 Progress to Date

DADCA has already achieved several important milestones in advancing the project:

1. Site identified on community land at Dornoch South, adjacent to the MUGA. The purchase of this land has already been agreed in principle and a legal document is now being finalised.
2. Finance of £1 million over and above consultancy costs already incurred ~~£917,000~~ has already been raised. This is over and above consultancy costs already incurred. The funds are from the following sources: the existing Social Club has been agreed for sale at £220,000. A further £30,000 has been guaranteed to bring the total sale value to £250,000; £280,000 from Dornoch Common Good Fund; ~~and~~ £387,000 in cash specifically allocated to this project; from the sale of five of six affordable housing plots c.£85,000 from sale of DADCA's final housing plot.
3. Professional team appointed – architect, quantity surveyor and consultants to prepare the business case and secure the rest of the funding.
 - Fully costed conceptual design, with an estimated build cost of £1.8 million.

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Figure 7: Floorplan



3. About DADCA

3.1 Key Business Details

Organisation name:

Dornoch and District Community Association

Address:

Dornoch Social Club
School Hill
Dornoch
Sutherland
IV25 3PF

Contact email: newdornochcommunitycentre@gmail.com

Legal status:

Scottish Charity: SC013715; Scottish Company 375856

3.2 Purpose and vision

DADCA exists to serve the local community by supporting social, cultural and recreational activities. The organisation has a board of 8 directors, a membership of 260 people and one of its two main purposes is to run and manage the Social Club, which it has done since buying the building on behalf of the community in 2012.

Today, DADCA's vision now has widened. The Board of Trustees now aims to realise the long-held community ambition of developing a new, purpose-built community centre, a facility designed to meet the needs of Dornoch's residents for decades to come and provide a vibrant hub for social connection and wellbeing.

3.3 Key Personnel and Project Team

DADCA has formed a sub-committee to take forward the Community Centre project. The members are:

Donald Goskirk (DADCA Trustee/Chairperson):



Having grown up in Sutherland, Donald attended school in Dornoch and Golspie before studying Business Studies and Optometry in Glasgow. He returned to the Highlands nearly 30 years ago to take over an optician's practice in Dingwall, later expanding to include branches in Golspie and Inverness, all of which remain successful today. He joined the DADCA board in 2016 and currently serves as Chair. Outside of work, he is an elder, trustee, and Treasurer of a local church, managing OSCR and HMRC compliance as it is a registered charity. His business and voluntary experience provides valuable support to DADCA's governance and ongoing activities.

Paddy Murray Balloan (DADCA Trustee/Treasurer):



Paddy is a retired chartered accountant whose career spans holding national and international roles with major corporations. He has previously worked with HSBC, where he was Global Head of Japanese Equities and the Tokyo branch manager. His experience includes company acquisitions and investments. His family comes from Dornoch, and Paddy retired to the family home in 2009. Since then, he has been actively involved in the Dornoch community. He was Treasurer of DACIC until May 2025, has been DADCA Treasurer since 2014 and served on the Community Council as Provost from 2020-2022.

Lucy Moir (DADCA Trustee):



Lucy Moir holds a Master's degree in Product Design Engineering and is now a dedicated educator who was born and raised in Dornoch. After establishing a strong foundation in engineering, she chose to bring her technical expertise into the classroom, where she has built a respected career in education. Lucy now serves as the Principal Teacher of Technical at Tain Royal Academy, where she leads her department with a focus on hands-on learning,

creativity, and real-world problem-solving. Alongside her professional achievements, Lucy is a mother to two young girls. She returned to Dornoch in 2021 to raise her family and enjoys volunteering in various projects throughout the community. Lucy has been on the DADCA board since 2022.

Consultancy Team:

Maclean-Yuille Consultancy is led by Karen Maclean-Yuille, an experienced business consultant with a strong background in community development and social enterprise. Karen brings a practical, person-centred approach to projects and specialises in community consultation, feasibility analysis, and realistic business planning, with a focus on supporting organisations that make a meaningful difference in their local area. Karen has worked in the sector for over 25 years, including 17 years as a Senior Business Adviser at Impact Hub Inverness and prior to that as Chief Executive of Social Firms Scotland. She has also served on the Board of Trustees of Calman Trust. In addition to her extensive professional experience, Karen holds a PRINCE2 Foundation qualification in Project Management and is currently studying part-time for an MBA.

Karen is working on this project with Kate McKinley, who has extensive experience working with community groups across the Highlands and Islands, notably community consultations, feasibility studies, options appraisals and business plans for community-owned assets, organisation reviews, governance and legal structures. Kate was previously a senior business adviser at Impact Hub Inverness and, before that, worked as a freelance consultant in both the public and private sectors. Kate was Chair of the board of trustees of a development trust covering the communities of Strathglass and Affric and is currently a Trustee of Strathglass Community Fund SCIO.

Together, Karen and Kate have collaborated on a wide range of successful community projects, including Go Golspie SCIO, the Dornoch Hub, South Skye Community Campus, and Kyle of Sutherland Development Trust.

Davie Campbell is a forensic accountant and community consultant with over 25 years' experience spanning finance, funding, and capital programme management. For the past decade, he has specialised in community housing and development, securing over £23 million in external funding and managing more than 75 projects across Scotland, including community hubs, hotels, cafés, and heritage centres. Known for his practical, relationship-driven approach, Davie works with clients across the private, public, and third sectors to deliver sustainable, high-impact results. He also holds a small portfolio of businesses and currently serves as Interim Chair of

NHS Orkney, with recent projects including Glentarf and Memorial Hall in Fort Augustus, a housing project in the North, and the Scalpay Community Hub.

Jimmy MacDonald, BSc ARCH

Jimmy has significant experience in working with communities, particularly in the design and development of community centres. He was lead architect for the Braemore Hall, Ullapool; Armadale Hall, Thurso; Doll Hall, Brora and the new hall at Contin which opened in 2021, on which the new Community Centre in Dornoch is based. Jimmy was born and raised in Dornoch and after graduating from Strathclyde University he worked for architectural firms in Glasgow gaining extensive experience in housing and community projects, before returning to Dornoch. His considerable portfolio also spans private domestic and social housing, schools, hospitals, industrial, retail and hospitality. Having formed the original Dornoch Community Association to raise funds, build and run the new Community Centre in 1980 he is a firm believer in community involvement. He has been Chairman of Dornoch Drama Club and Sutherland Riding Club; suggested and organised the first Dornoch Street Party in 1999 to celebrate the Millennium and hosted the annual Hogmanay event until 2023; and continues to be commentator and help organise Dornoch, Tain, Strathpeffer and Helmsdale Highland Gatherings.

4. Community Needs and Evidence of Support

Extensive community engagement (**Table 3**) over more than a decade about the concept of a new build Community Centre has demonstrated strong and sustained support. Five separate community engagement programmes have been conducted over that time and consistently show strong support for a new, purpose-built community centre. In addition, a community ballot was held in March 2026, involving an online survey and leaflet drop to 1,600 homes, asking people whether they support the proposal to build a new community centre at Dornoch South.

4.1 Community Support and Evidence of Demand

Table 3: Community survey responses 2009 - 2026

Date	Number of responses	Support for a new build Community Centre in Dornoch.
2009	389	54%
2013	580	75%
2015	534	93% (for a new building centre and involving transfer of land at Meadows Park to community ownership).
2019	13 stakeholders, 49 community members	Consensus was the need for a flexible, modern facility. 85% supported a new centre with curling barn.
2025	120 community members 19 stakeholder and social club user interviews	Consensus for a modern venue suitable for multi-use community activity. Improved facilities for youth and cultural events. Affordable, accessible meeting space for local groups. A performance venue suitable for drama, theatre and live music.
2026	703	85.7% voted in favour of the proposal to build a new community centre at Dornoch South.

Feedback and comments gathered through community engagement over the years provide a strong body of evidence on the limitations of the Social Club.

“Accessibility is poor for those with mobility issues and it’s cold in winter”

“The car parking is terrible. The toilets can only be accessed from the main hall so if more than one groups is meeting in the building, those in the Struie room can’t access then”

“It’s very cold most of the year, especially the bathrooms. Parking is not ideal. No Wi-Fi to speak of, no proper sound system, no stage for community productions.”

“A new community centre is desperately needed. A town like Dornoch doesn’t currently have a big enough space to hold larger events.”

Importantly, some regular users with aspirations to grow are currently unable to do so because of the limitations of the Social Club. This includes:

1. The annual Fibre Fest, which attracts visitors from across Scotland, finds lack of space in the Social Club a limiting factor.
2. Young Curators Club would like to be able to run more youth activities, but the facilities of the current Social Club mean that this is not possible.

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4.2 Opportunities and Future Demand

The flexibility and increased capacity of the new Centre are expected to significantly increase community use compared with the current Social Club (**Figure 8**). This increase is anticipated from both the expansion of existing activities and the introduction of new groups, as illustrated in **Figure 9**.

Initial opportunities already identified include drama and theatre, weddings and live music events with further detail provided in Section 5.3: Opportunities.

Figure 8: Current usage of social club – November 2025

2025 November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Christian Fellowship Christian Fellowship Sunday School Christian Fellowship evening service	3 Senior Indoor Bowling	4 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS	5 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	6 Pilates	7	8 Brichen Hooley
9 Christian Fellowship Christian Fellowship Sunday School Christian Fellowship evening service	10 Senior Indoor Bowling	11 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club	12 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	13 Crafting Class Pilates Dornoch Dance Academy	14 Crafting Class	15 Quiz Night
16 Christian Fellowship Christian Fellowship Sunday School Christian Fellowship evening service	17 Senior Indoor Bowling	18 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club	19 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	20 Pilates Dornoch Dance Academy	21 Cinema Club	22 Church Breakfast
23 Christian Fellowship Christian Fellowship Sunday School Christian Fellowship evening service	24 Senior Indoor Bowling	25 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club	26 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	27 Pilates Dornoch Dance Academy	28	29 St Andrews Fair
30						

The Christian Fellowship, which currently books the Social Club around three times per week, has acquired the building for its own use. Their bookings are therefore excluded from the estimation and overall demand for the new Centre is still forecast to rise. This projected growth will come from a combination of:

- 1. **New regular users**, such as a drama club and UHI students, as indicated in the feasibility study.
- 2. **Increased activity** from existing groups, based on feedback from the user survey.
- 3. **Occasional or one-off bookings** of the main hall for larger community events.

Emerging Opportunities

- 1. **Drama and Theatre:** Both [\(Dornoch & Community Interest Company\)](#) DACIC and local events professionals have confirmed that Eden Court Theatre has expressed interest in touring performances in Dornoch, but opportunities have been lost due to the lack of a suitable venue. The new centre would make this possible and could also support the revival of Dornoch's amateur dramatics group.
- 2. **Major Celebrations:** With its proximity to Dornoch Cathedral and a dining capacity of up to 200, the new centre would be ideally suited

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for weddings, large dinners, and other major celebrations. Initial discussions with local caterers indicate strong potential for regular bookings.

- 3. **Live Music:** An events company currently hosts live music in other Sutherland venues due to the lack of suitable space in Dornoch. A new hall could host such events locally—potentially on a monthly basis—drawing audiences from Brora, Golspie, Tain, Bonar Bridge, and beyond. The closure of the Ironworks in Inverness (2023) further enhances this opportunity, positioning Dornoch as a potential destination for mid-sized touring acts and popular bands, generating both community benefit and economic impact through increased local spending.
- 4. **Further and Higher Education:** The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) has expressed interest in using the new centre once or twice a year for training events. UHI has also noted that students currently have limited options for evening and weekend activities, and that the new centre could provide valuable opportunities for student social events during term time.

The illustrative schedule below (**Figure 9**) shows a potential future programme (November 2027), demonstrating how the new centre could support a broader range of activities and increased community participation.

New or expanded activities are highlighted in purple.

Figure 9: Example programme of activities in new Community Centre

2027 November

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Senior Indoor Bowling Drama Club	2 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS	3 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	4 Pilates Youth Club	5 Childrens soft play session	6 Brichen Hooley Private event
7	8 Senior Indoor Bowling Drama Club	9 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS	10 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	11 Crafting Class Dornoch Dance Academy Student Social Activities	12 BID Meeting	13 Car Boot Sale Quiz Night
14	15 Senior Indoor Bowling Drama Club	16 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club	17 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	18 Crafting Class Dornoch Dance Academy Youth Club	19 Crafting Class	20 Music event
21	22 Senior Indoor Bowling Drama Club	23 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club	24 Wednesday Ladies Club Senior Indoor Bowling Young Curators Club Ascension Tang Soo Do	25 Pilates Dornoch Dance Academy Student Social Activities	26 Cinema Club	27 St Andrews Fair St Andrews Ceilidh
28	29 Senior Indoor Bowling Drama Club	30 Dornoch Firth Art Group SKAS East Sutherland Camera Club				

4.3 Social and Environmental Outcomes

The project for a new Community Centre provides a unique opportunity for important benefits:

Community benefits

1. Creates a central space for the whole community.
2. Provides space when weather is a limiting factor.
3. Indoor safe and warm space for activities.
4. Promotes community activities with increased participation, tackling social isolation, and enhancing wellbeing.
5. Opportunities for learning.
6. Opportunities for existing community groups to grow and new ones to start.
7. Less travel because more events and activities can be provided locally.

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Environmental benefits

1. Low-carbon design.
2. Energy efficiency.
3. Lower heating cost.

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5. Market research

5.1 Target Users

The new Community Centre will serve a broad and diverse range of users from Dornoch and the surrounding area, as well as visitors to the town.

Key user groups include:

- Local residents of all ages seeking opportunities for social connection and recreation.
- Community groups and clubs, including youth, fitness, cultural, and social organisations currently based at the Dornoch Social Club.
- Event organisers, including those planning weddings, celebrations, and conferences looking for a flexible, modern local venue.
- Local businesses looking for meetings or conference facilities.
- The wider Highland community seeking a venue for concerts and events.

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- Visitors: Dornoch attracts many thousands of visitors each year. Concerts, musical events and community markets are likely to prove attractive to this sector of the market.

5.2 Competitor and Comparator Venues

Dornoch currently has limited venues able to host large or multi-purpose community activities.

- **West Church Hall:** A small, traditional hall with limited capacity and minimal storage or breakout space.
- **Dornoch Cathedral:** A beautiful and historic setting used for services and occasional concerts but unsuitable for regular community or commercial hire.
- **The Hub:** A modern venue offering meeting facilities, but which cannot accommodate large-scale events, performances, or celebrations, and its meeting room is not fully accessible.

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There is no single venue in Dornoch that currently offers the flexibility, accessibility, and capacity that the proposed new Community Centre will deliver.

5.3 Income Opportunities

The development of the new Community Centre presents several revenue-generating opportunities that align with both local demand and the facility's enhanced capabilities. As the venue establishes its presence and reputation, there is scope to grow income from a range of activities and strategic partnerships. The key opportunities are outlined below:

Opportunity	Description & Rationale
Weddings & Celebrations	Proximity to Dornoch Cathedral (under 10 minutes) makes the Centre an ideal reception venue. Initial discussions with local caterers indicate strong demand.
Live Music & Dances	A local events company currently books venues elsewhere due to lack of suitable space in Dornoch. The closure of the Ironworks in Inverness (2023) strengthens the opportunity for mid-tier touring acts.
Theatre & Touring Performances	Previous communication with Eden Court indicates that if there was a large enough venue there would be strong potential to host visiting

Opportunity	Description & Rationale
	performers and touring productions, filling a current gap in local provision.
Bar Operations	A well-managed bar will be essential for evening events. Initially, a joint venture with local pubs is proposed to manage licensing and staffing efficiently.

These opportunities provide both clear revenue potential and social value, supporting local economic development, cultural growth, and greater community participation

5.4 The Project's Fit with National and Regional Priorities.

The project for a new Community Centre aligns closely with several national and regional priorities:

1. The Caithness and Sutherland Plan singles out the former abattoir site in Dornoch – now known as Dornoch South where the Community Centre will be built – as a place-making priority.
2. Priorities set out The Highland Council's 'Future Highland' programme 2022 – 2027 including community wellbeing, inclusion, and rural regeneration.
3. The Scottish Government's guidance on 20-minute neighbourhoods where local living provides people with the opportunity to meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance from home.
4. Community Wealth Building Bill. Introduced to the Scottish Parliament in March 2025 as a place-based approach to economic development. It aims to help build community cohesion and resilience, access to spaces, facilities and amenities by stimulating and retaining economic activity within a local economy.

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6. Management

6.1 Governance

DADCA will retain full ownership of the new Community Centre and remain the accountable body for the asset. Governance and strategic oversight will sit with the DADCA Board of Trustees, ensuring compliance, financial stewardship and alignment with the organisation's charitable objectives.

6.2 Operations and Staffing

The Centre will be managed directly by DADCA, supported by a part-time cleaner/caretaker and a team of volunteers, which is the model at the existing Social Club.

Proposed operational responsibilities:

1. **DADCA Management Team:** Responsible for bookings, community liaison, finances, and day-to-day oversight.
2. **Cleaner/Caretaker (Part-Time):** Responsible for cleaning, light maintenance, room setup, and general building upkeep.
3. **Volunteer Support Team:** Community volunteers assisting with administration, events, and user support, promoting local involvement and keeping costs manageable.

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6.3 Operational Policy: Access and Responsibility

The new Centre will continue the "personal responsibility" policy currently used at the Social Club. The building will be accessible 24 hours a day, seven days a week, providing maximum flexibility for community and commercial users.

Under this system, hirers will be issued a secure door access code once their booking and payment have been confirmed. This approach promotes trust and flexibility while reducing the need for on-site staffing during extended hours.

Each user or group will be responsible for ensuring that the facility is used appropriately, left secure, and maintained in good condition after use. Clear terms and conditions will accompany all bookings, outlining user responsibilities for access, safety, cleaning, and reporting any issues.

This proven model has worked successfully at the existing Social Club and will continue to form the basis of the new Centre's operating procedures, ensuring efficient, community-led management while keeping running costs low while encouraging shared ownership of the facility.

7. Income and Bookings Forecast

7.1 Pricing Strategy

Hire rates have been set to reflect both the enhanced facilities offered by the new centre and current market conditions across comparable community venues in the Highlands. The pricing approach balances affordability for local users with the need to generate sustainable income for the facility.

7.2 Community Bookings

Community bookings are expected to remain the core of the new Centre's operations, reflecting the facility's primary social purpose. Income from community use will follow a realistic growth pattern, based on the transition from the existing Social Club to the new Centre.

Pricing Basis:

Hire rates have been set at 8% above the current Social Club rates to reflect the improved facilities:

- 1. **Main Hall:** the rate increases from £15 to **£16.20 per hour**, meaning users will pay **£1.20 more per hour** than the current Social Club rate.
- 2. **New Struie Room** ~~Lesser Hall~~: the hire rate increases from £9 (current Struie Room rate) to **£9.70 per hour**, meaning users will pay **£0.70 more per hour** than at present.

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Assumptions:

- 1. Booking volumes grow progressively as the community adjusts to the new Centre's availability and improved facilities.
- 2. Community bookings are expected to deliver steady income growth in the first year, driven by additional user groups, new activities, and improved flexibility of spaces.

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7.3 Commercial Bookings

Commercial hire represents a key opportunity for growth, including weddings, private functions, concerts, conferences, and other events that draw visitors from outside the immediate community.

Pricing Basis:

- 1. Weddings / Private Events: £1,500 per event, inclusive of table and chair hire.
- 2. Concerts / Music Events: £3,000 per event (including share of bar revenue).

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Developing the Centre's reputation as an attractive venue for external organisations and visitors will be important in building this income stream.

7.4 Cash Flow Forecast Year 1

Hall bookings for Year 1 (**Figure 10**) are based on current usage levels at the Social Club, with a realistic ramp-up period as the community transitions to the new Centre. For Months 1–3, booking hours have been held at current levels. From Month 4 onwards, an increase in usage is forecast as new groups begin using the facility and existing users expand their activities.

Income from large events has been based on a conservative realistic estimate of three weddings and one music event during Year 1, generating an estimated £7,500 per year.

The Main Hall in the New Community Centre will be one of the largest halls in the Highlands, and its location in the popular tourist destination of Dornoch with its historic Cathedral will almost certainly attract many more commercial events than those estimated above.

Other venues and local caterers have advised based on their own experience that because of the New Community Centre's planned location next door to Dornoch Cathedral there will be a demand for bookings at least once a month throughout the year, obviously with more in the summer and fewer in the winter.

Music events are more difficult to estimate. However Dornoch has recently been successful in putting on an outdoor all-day music event for 2,000 attendees in 2025, and despite the poverty of the region, music events continue to attract crowds in the Highlands. The event is being expanded to a 2-day event in 2026.

Theatre events have conservatively not been specifically included in the forecast, but previous communication with Eden Court indicates that there would be strong potential to host visiting performers and touring productions, filling a current gap in local provision.

Why are our income estimates so conservative? While demand to use the New Community Centre is likely to be considerably higher than our forecast bookings, care may need to be taken that it does not crowd out the

[community use of the building which is the real purpose of the New Community Centre.](#)

Additionally, sundry income of £400 per month has been included to reflect small donations and fundraising.

Occasional bookings — such as crafting classes, fairs, or music events — have **not** been included in Months 1–3. This provides a conservative baseline and ensures estimates remain realistic. As confidence grows and reputation builds, income from occasional bookings is expected to increase in subsequent years.

Overall, Year 1 income projections are deliberately conservative, with steady growth assumed as user behaviour adjusts to the improved facilities.

Figure 10: Cash Flow Forecast Year 1

DADCA - New Community Centre		Year one													
Notes	Income	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12	Total	
1	Main Hall	Community Bookings													
2															
3		Hours per month	53.25	53.25	53.25	83.75	83.75	83.75	90.75	90.75	90.75	90.75	90.75	90.75	
4		Hourly rate	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	£16.20	
		Total revenue	£863	£863	£863	£1,357	£1,357	£1,357	£1,470	£1,470	£1,470	£1,470	£1,470	15,479	
5	Lesser Hall	Hours per month	22	22	22	32.5	32.5	32.5	35.5	35.5	35.5	44	44	44	
6		Hourly rate	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	£9.70	
		Total revenue	£213	£213	£213	£315	£315	£315	£344	£344	£344	£427	£427	3,899	
7	Kitchen	Hours per month	8	8	8	8	10	10	10	10	12	12	12	12	
8		Hourly rate	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	£7.50	
		Total revenue	£60	£60	£60	£60	£75	£75	£75	£75	£90	£90	£90	900	
	Total Income Community Bookings		£1,136	£1,136	£1,136	£1,732	£1,747	£1,747	£1,890	£1,890	£1,905	£1,987	£1,987	£20,279	
9	Entire building	Large Events													
10		Number of Weddings per month					1			1			1		
11		Fee per event	£1,500				£1,500			£1,500			£1,500	4,500	
12		Number of Music events/concerts per month							1						
13		Fee per event (including share of bar revenue)	£3,000						£3,000					3,000	
		Demountable stage (per event)	£40				£40		£40				£40	160	
		Total revenue	£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,540	£0	£3,040	£0	£1,540	£0	£0	£1,540	
	Total Income Large Events		£0	£0	£0	£0	£1,540	£0	£3,040	£0	£1,540	£0	£0	£1,540	
14	Other	Sundry Income													
			£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	£400	4,800	
	Total Income		£1,536	£1,536	£1,536	£2,132	£3,687	£2,147	£5,330	£2,290	£3,845	£2,387	£2,387	£32,739	
15	Expenditure	Accountancy fees	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	1,500	
16		Advertising and Marketing Costs	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	£75	900	
17		Caretaking/cleaner	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	£1,000	12,000	
18		Water Rates	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	0	
19		Heat and Light	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	£150	1,800	
20		Insurance	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	£260	3,120	
21		Licenses	£653	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	653	
22		Repairs & Maintenance	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	£50	600	
23		Performing rights	£300	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	300	
24		Phone and internet	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	£60	720	
25		Admin and Book-keeping	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	£667	8,004	
		Total Overheads	£3,215	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£2,262	£3,762	£29,597	
	Net Surplus/Deficit		-£1,679	-£726	-£726	-£130	£1,425	-£115	£3,068	£28	£1,583	£125	£125	£165	
26	Opening bank balance		£50,000	£48,321	£47,595	£46,869	£46,739	£48,164	£48,049	£51,117	£51,144	£52,727	£52,852	£52,977	
	Closing bank balance		£48,321	£47,595	£46,869	£46,739	£48,164	£48,049	£51,117	£51,144	£52,727	£52,852	£52,977	£53,142	

7.5 Five –Year Financial Projections

The financial projections (**Figure 11**) indicate that the new Community Centre will move from the current annual deficit to a sustainable operating surplus from Year 1 onward. The financial projections show a positive and sustainable outlook for the new community centre. Income grows from £32,739 in Year 1 to £49,618 in Year 5. A surplus is achieved every year. This indicates strong financial management and capacity for reinvestment.

Figure 11. Financial Projections: Current Social Club vs New Community Centre (Years 1–5)
Both income and costs are at 2026 prices, i.e. do not include any inflation uplift

DADCA - New Community Centre						
FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS						
Income Summary (£)	Current Social Club					
	April 2024 - March 2025	YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3	YEAR 4	YEAR 5
Community Bookings	£11,323	£20,279	£24,480	£25,082	£25,082	£25,082
Large Events		£7,660	£13,780	£19,080	£19,120	£19,136
Sundry Income	£5,772	£4,800	£4,800	£4,800	£5,040	£5,400
Total Income	£17,095	£32,739	£43,060	£48,962	£49,242	£49,618
Overhead and operating expenses (£)						
Accountancy fees	£1,400	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500	£1,500
Advertising and Marketing Costs	£75	£900	£900	£900	£900	£900
Caretaking/cleaner	£8,616	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000
Water Rates (assume charity exemption)	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0
Heat and Light	£5,572	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800	£1,800
Insurance	£2,575	£3,120	£3,120	£3,120	£3,120	£3,120
Licenses	£500	£653	£653	£653	£653	£653
Repairs & Maintenance	£5,183	£600	£600	£600	£600	£600
Performing rights	£0	£300	£300	£300	£300	£300
Phone and internet	£666	£720	£720	£720	£720	£720
Admin and Book-keeping	£7,042	£8,004	£8,004	£8,004	£8,004	£8,004
Total Expenditure	£31,629	£29,597	£29,597	£29,597	£29,597	£29,597
Net Surplus/Deficit	(£14,534)	£3,142	13,463	19,365	19,645	20,021

Financial Assumptions

The projected expenditure is based on current DADCA costs for the existing Social Club, with adjustments to reflect the larger building, increased usage, an energy-efficient heating system, and expanded operational requirements at the new Community Centre.

A detailed breakdown of assumptions can be found in **Appendix 1**.

Hire fees remain at Year 1 price levels for the entire forecast period. This approach is designed to:

- Maintain affordability for local groups.

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- 2. Support a smooth transition from the current Social Club.

Future pricing will be reviewed annually and aligned with operating costs, comparable venues, and community feedback.

Assumption – Growth in Large Events (Year 2)

Year 2 assumes a modest increase in demand for large events as awareness of the new Centre grows and marketing activity begins. The projections include:

- 1. An increase in weddings from three in Year 1 to five in Year 2 and six in Years 3 – 5.
- 2. An increase in music/theatre events from one to two events.

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These assumptions reflect early reputation-building and increased visibility within the local and regional events market, while remaining realistic and achievable. Further growth is expected in Year 3 as the Community Centre becomes established as a trusted venue for celebrations, performances, and conferences.

Pricing Assumptions – Large Events (Years 3–5)

A price uplift has been applied from **Year 3 onwards** to reflect increased demand, improved reputation, and stronger market positioning of the venue.

Event Type	Year 1–2 Price	Year 3–5 Price
Weddings	£1,500	£1,800
Music Events	£3,000	£4,000

8. Capital costs

A cost plan prepared by WSD Chartered Surveyors indicate capital costs for the project of £1.7m with the following budget headings:

Build costs including contingencies £1,566,000

Professional fees:

Architectural, structural and civil engineering, quantity surveyor £84,000

Working capital £50,000

TOTAL £1,700,000

The estimated build cost has been revised to **£1.8 million** to reflect recent design enhancements not included in the original cost plan. These include retractable seating and a high-quality soundproof partition, which will improve the flexibility of the building, create additional rentable space, and strengthen its potential for community use and event income.

8.1 Funding

DADCA has engaged a specialist fundraising consultant to develop a comprehensive funding strategy. This will include several funding scenarios and a match-funding matrix, reflecting the fact that this is a significant capital project with multiple funding sources, each with different criteria and intervention rates.

Funding will be sought across a range of relevant streams, including:

1. General capital funding.
2. General revenue funding.
3. Community tourism funding.
4. Economic development funding.
5. Wellbeing and health funding.
6. Energy efficiency and sustainability funding.
7. Local and Regional Community funding.

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This approach will maximise eligibility across multiple funding bodies and help build a viable funding package. Early contact has already been made with some funders to gauge likely support levels, timescales and eligibility criteria.

9. Risk Assessment

A project of this scale naturally carries a range of risks relating to funding, delivery, operations, and long-term sustainability. To ensure the project is robust and resilient, a structured risk assessment has been carried out covering financial, operational, and strategic considerations. Each risk has been assessed in terms of likelihood and impact, with mitigation measures identified to manage or reduce potential issues.

The key risks and mitigation strategies are set out in the table below:

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Funding shortfall	Medium	High	A fundraising consultant, with extensive knowledge of the funding landscape, is part of the project team and has already built strong relationships with

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
			10 potential funders; if short fall remains, a community fundraising campaign will be launched to help bridge the gap.
Remaining plots doesn't sell	<u>Low</u> Medium	<u>Medium</u> High	Promote the plots widely to encourage sales. Adjust project phasing if necessary to allow more time for sale completion. Identify alternative funding options.
Loss of key skills from DADCA board of trustees during the project's duration.	<u>Low</u> Medium	Medium	Recruitment of new trustees with appropriate skills. <u>Various organisations including the The Royal Dornoch Golf Club and DACIC will be increasingly involved as the project progresses.</u> is committed to supporting the community where it can. Recent survey demonstrates great interest within the town, and Dornoch is blessed with a wide range of professionals, so recruitment of appropriate Trustees should not be difficult. The club has significant commercial experience among its members and has indicated there may be a willingness to join the DADCA board to strengthen the skills base.
Construction cost increases <u>due to specific costs of this proposed</u>	<u>Low</u> Medium	<u>High</u> High	<u>Building plot is flat and already checked for poisons etc.</u> Construction method is

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
building.			very simple. Costs have been verified by experienced Chartered Surveyor. Maintain design flexibility.
Construction cost increases due to general building cost inflation	High	High	The recent outbreak of the Iran War has obviously increased this risk so increased funding may be necessary. However this risk will become the builder's risk once tender has been accepted.
Building company becomes insolvent	Low	High	Tenders will only be sought from financially strong companies.
Delays in planning/land transfer	Low	Medium	Ongoing engagement with Highland Council and DACIC.
Lower than expected usage: A) General	Low As per paragraph 7.6 above, demand to use the New Community Centre is likely to be considerably higher than our forecast bookings.	Medium	There is already a strong core of regular users and established community groups committed to using the new Community Centre. Local businesses have strongly indicated they would use the Centre regularly for live events. In addition, there will be active promotion to local businesses and organisations to further secure regular bookings and events.
Lower than expected usage: B) Weddings and other catering	Low	Medium	The Centre's proximity (under 10 minutes) to Dornoch Cathedral is a key advantage.

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Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
events underperform			Partnerships with local accommodation providers, caterers, and photographers will help attract bookings. Targeted marketing to wedding planners and couples will raise awareness.
Lower than expected usage: C) Live music and dances not financially viable	Medium	Medium	Focus on mid-tier bands and community dances. Build reputation for “a good night out” through consistent quality events and local promotion.
Lower than expected usage: D) First 2 years operation	Medium	Medium	DADCA aims to raise a further £25-50,000 by crowd-funding to give it enough working capital to act as a capital buffer

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10. Implementation and Next Steps

This section sets out the planned timeline and key milestones required to deliver the new Dornoch Community Centre. Beginning in November 2025, the programme outlines the stages from planning and funding through to construction and final opening. The following table summarises the key activities and expected outcomes over the proposed implementation period.

Forecast Timeline from April 2026

Timeframe	Activity	Outcomes
Q1 2026	Complete Business Plan.	Completion of detailed business plan.
	Submit planning in principle to The Highland Council	This includes all plans, elevations and so will be a major step for the project.
Q2 2026	Finalise agreement with	Subject to Planning

Timeframe	Activity	Outcomes
	DACIC for transfer of land to DADCA including DACIC to manage the completed building.	approval and any other conditions agreed with DACIC.
	Finalise funding plan.	This will identify all potential funders with potential amounts.
	Funding applications.	Submission of funding applications to major grant bodies and capital funders.
	Get VAT advice	Ensure there is no VAT liability on building costs.
	DADCA sells the remaining plot for £85,000 raising the cash balance available for building a new Community Centre to £1million.	Cash balance forecast to rise to £1 million less preparatory costs (feasibility studies, business planning, and planning permission).
	DADCA to sell the Social Club for £250,000.	Social Club sale completed, contributing to project capital funding.
Q3 2026	Achieve planning consent.	Enables clearer progress with potential funders.
	Apply for Building Warrant.	Technical drawings and specifications finalised and submitted.
	Finalise funding arrangements.	Funding to be confirmed following initial applications.
Q4 2026	Tender process for construction.	Issue tender documents, appoint preferred contractor/s.
Q1 2027	Commence Construction (estimated 33 weeks build period).	Site preparation and build commencement at Dornoch South.
Q2 2027	Project Completion and Official Opening (indicative).	New Dornoch Community Centre completed, opened, and operational.

Appendices

Appendix 1- Cash Flow Assumptions

Notes	Year 1	Years 2-5
	INCOME	INCOME
1	Month 1 represents the month of opening	
2	Community bookings of the main hall, including clubs and local groups, quiz/cinema evenings, and private events such as childrens parties.	
3	Hours of hall usage are based on current booking levels, with a gradual increase over the year to reflect anticipated growth from new clubs forming and existing clubs increasing the number of times they meet.	
4	Users of the main hall will pay £1.20 per hour more than the current Social Club rate, reflecting an 8% uplift for the improved facilities.	Hire fees remain at Year 1 price levels for the entire forecast period.
5	Community bookings of the lesser hall for local group meetings, art activities etc	
6	Hire rates set at 8% above current Social Club rate for the Struie Room to reflect the improved facilities so users will pay £0.70 per hour more than currently.	Hire fees remain at Year 1 price levels for the entire forecast period.
7	Community bookings of the kitchen for events, activities at the MUGA etc	
8	Hire rates based on similar venues.	
9	Dornoch is a popular wedding destination; assumes a conservative estimate of 3 weddings in Year 1	Weddings are projected to increase from three in Year 1 to five in Year 2, and to six per year in Years 3-5.
10	Hire rate set at £1,500 per wedding, inclusive of table and chair hire, in line with competitive local rates and comparable community halls across the Highlands.	
11	Based on discussions with local event organisers, it is assumed that one music events or concerts will be held in Year 1.	The number of music/theatre events is projected to increase from one in Year 1 to two annually in Years 2-5.
12	Music events charged at £3,000 per event (including share of bar revenue).	A price uplift from £3,000 to £4,000 has been applied from Year 3 onwards to reflect increased demand, an enhanced reputation, and stronger market positioning of the venue.
13	A £40 charge per event has been included for the hire and setup of the demountable stage, where required.	
14	Sundry income (£400/month) represents small donations, community fundraising, and irregular receipts.	
	EXPENDITURE	EXPENDITURE
15	Annual accounts prepared by external accountant – based on 2024/25 actuals with slight increase to reflect higher income levels.	All expenditure in Years 2-5 is held at Year 1 price levels for the duration of the forecast period, with no inflation uplift applied.
16	£75/month for local promotion and listings.	
17	Caretaking/cleaning - increase on 2024-25 figure of £8190 to reflect larger building.	
18	Assumed exempt from water charges, but if DADCA applies for a permanent alcohol licence, the exemption will no longer apply and water rates will become payable.	
19	£150/month estimated, based on a community building of similar design and energy performance.	
20	Insurance has been increased from the current premium of £2,200 to £3,120 to reflect the larger building size, higher replacement value, expanded capacity and more frequent high-risk events (weddings, concerts) expected at the new centre.	
21	Licences: £653 per year, covering public entertainment, occasional alcohol licences, and film screening permissions. Costs expected to rise slightly if a permanent Premises Licence is obtained in later years.	
22	Assumed £50/month for routine upkeep; as a new building, maintenance costs are expected to be low.	
23	PPL PRS Licence - £300	
24	£50/month - based on current for social club	
25	Bookkeeping and administration costs are based on current DADCA arrangements, with a slight increase to reflect larger premises and greater workload.	
	OPENING BALANCE	
26	The £50,000 opening balance represents an allocation from the capital project budget set aside as initial working capital to support Year 1 operating costs.	

Appendix 2 - Letters of support



The Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC)
The Dornoch Hub,
Argyle Street,
Dornoch, IV25 3LA

7th November 2025

To whom it may concern,

Letter of Support for the Proposed Dornoch Community Centre

The Dornoch Area Community Interest Company (DACIC) is delighted to provide this letter of support for the proposed new Community Centre in Dornoch.

DACIC was established to develop and manage community assets for the benefit of residents and visitors to Dornoch and the wider area. We fully recognise the pressing need for a modern, flexible, and inclusive community facility that can host a wide range of activities, groups, and services. The proposed new centre represents a vital step in ensuring that Dornoch continues to thrive as a connected, resilient, and forward-looking community.

Our organisation has been closely involved in the development of community infrastructure locally, including the Dornoch Hub, Community Transport Project, and Dornoch MUGA. We therefore appreciate the value that a well-designed, accessible facility can bring — supporting local wellbeing, tackling social isolation, providing opportunities for learning and participation, and creating a sustainable base for local organisations to operate from.

We strongly endorse the vision and objectives outlined in the Community Centre business plan and confirm DACIC's commitment to collaborating wherever possible to ensure the project's success.

Yours faithfully,

Luke Watson
Chair
The Dornoch Area Community Interest Company



ROYAL DORNOCH

Paddy Murray
Treasurer
DADCA
Rubhan Beag
Hilton
Dornoch IV25 3PW

Our Ref: 0010/NDH
Your Ref:
Date: 03/11/2025

Dear Paddy,

Royal Dornoch Golf Club was delighted to hear that, after many years, plans to build a new community centre for the town are progressing well, and we give our full support for this project.

Dornoch has grown and changed significantly over recent years, and although the existing social club is pretty busy, it's clearly not really fit for the era we now live in or the needs of the community.

The Golf Club remains committed to helping the community where we can. If, at any point, you feel the DADCA board of trustees would benefit from additional support and skills – particularly to help drive the new community centre project forward – do get in touch. The club has significant commercial and business experience amongst its members, and there may well be a willingness to perhaps join the DADCA board to add to its skills base.

I wish you every success with this significant project for Dornoch.

Yours sincerely,

Neil Hampton
General Manager



To Whom it may concern

Dornoch Community Centre

I am writing to express my strong support for the development of the new Dornoch Community Centre. This initiative represents a vital investment in the social infrastructure of the town and will serve as a cornerstone for community wellbeing, inclusion, and resilience.

The proposed centre will provide a welcoming and accessible space for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities. It will enable a wide range of activities—from youth programmes and elder support groups to cultural events, training workshops, and local governance meetings. In doing so, it will help foster stronger community ties, reduce social isolation, and promote active citizenship.

From a policy perspective, the Dornoch Community Centre aligns with key strategic priorities, including:

- Community empowerment and participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Sustainable local development
- Inclusive access to services

The centre will also contribute to the local economy by creating jobs, supporting volunteering, and attracting visitors to the area.

I commend the dedication of the local stakeholders and volunteers who have worked tirelessly to bring this vision forward. Their commitment reflects the strength and spirit of the Dornoch community.

I fully support this project and urge funding bodies and decision-makers to recognise its value and approve the necessary resources to make it a reality.

Yours sincerely,

Councillor Bill Lobban
Convener of the Highland Council

Councillor Bill Lobban
Convener of The Highland Council

The Highland Council, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX

Hi Karen

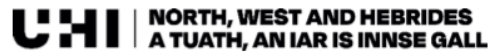
Apologies for the delay in sending this note of support.

The golf curriculum hosts around 75-80 students in Dornoch between September and April each year. While we have teaching space and conference space we utilise on campus at the UHI Centre for Golf. However, the students do lack access to a large space in the evening and weekends. If there was space that could host student activities and events in the evening and weekends, I think they may look to utilise that. They clearly use the golf courses and therefore the clubhouse, but there may be other events they could look to develop as well. I think an option to have a larger space in the town would be beneficial to all.

Best Regards

Alan

Alan Fleming
Curriculum Manager
PGA Advanced Professional



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6/11/25

Dear Paddy

It's with real enthusiasm that Dornoch BID has learnt of DADCA's plans for a new community centre at Dornoch South. We're aware that this has been a long-held aspiration for the people of Dornoch and that, while the Social Club has been well-used, it's been obvious for some time that a 180-year-old building - that was never designed to host community events and activities - has reached the end of its useful life. A bigger, purpose-built facility is well overdue.

In many ways Dornoch could be an ideal centre for Wedding parties in the Northern Highlands, with the Cathedral, beach, and many good restaurants. However, we are short of a large, attractive Reception space in the centre of Town. The new Community Centre could provide just such a space, with ample parking and catering facilities onsite. In this way the new centre would contribute to the growth of the Dornoch economy.

We give our full support to this project, hope you get the funding you need, and very much look forward to seeing the new centre fully operational.

Kind regards

Ginny Knox

Chair,
Dornoch BID

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Web: www.thisisdornoch.com Email: Dornochbid@thisisdornoch.com Tel: 07471 200 103

4th November 2025

To whom it may concern,

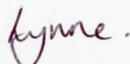
Re: New Community Centre in Dornoch

I am writing in support of a new community centre for Dornoch. Historylinks Museum's Young Curators Club currently meet in the existing centre and would certainly benefit from a larger and warmer place to meet. Although general facilities at the centre are pretty good, the access is not good. The YCC share the space on Wednesday evenings with another group and there is no sound proofing between the rooms which means that the children are sometimes not free to be themselves. Using a different room in the building would mean that the children having to cross the car park to use the kitchen and toilets. Therefore a new centre would be wonderful for the group.

We are constantly trying to improve facilities and attract young people to the museum and one of our ideas is to have a group for teenagers to engage in heritage in the community. Some of the sessions we would be able to run at the museum but having a modern community centre would provide a place that we could use to run larger events such as fundraisers for the group.

I believe that the local community would benefit from the proposed community centre particularly in terms of access to the building.

Kind regards,



Lynne Mahoney

Curator