

THE **DAVA WAY** ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held 10th March 2026

Venue: Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG.

Meeting Opened: 19:00

Item	Minute	Action By
1	<u>Welcome:</u> Neil Sinclair chaired the meeting and welcomed members.	
2	<u>Present:</u> Malcolm Campbell (MC), Neil Sinclair (NS), Paul Barron (PB), Pete Mitchell (PM), Robbie Roberts (RR), Tim Heaps (TH), Trevor Thornley (TT).	
	<u>Apologies:</u> Michael J Sutherland (MS).	
3	<p><u>Minutes of the previous meeting held on 10th February 2026</u> The minutes of the previous Dava Way Association (DWA) BoT meeting were read and accepted without change.</p> <p>Proposed: RR Seconded: MC</p>	
4	<p><u>Matters Arising from the previous meeting</u></p> <p>4.1 Ref 4.2: Action changed. MC distributed copies of a draft text to be sent to the appropriate estate offices, to enquire if they wish to make a contribution to offset the DWA costs for path surface repairs (rut and pothole infilling) north of Longley Crossing. PB suggested that such a direct approach may actually prove counterproductive. He proposed that regular face-to-face meetings be held with each landowner/factor as this would enable the DWA to address any niggles that the estate may have regarding the Dava Way (DW), discover whether the DWA has a part to play in any estate development plans, showcase the positive contributions that the DWA are making to estate infrastructure, and enquire if the estate would like to offset some of the costs of those improvements. Agreed unanimously, meetings to be held annually. MC will write to the owner/factor of each estate and arrange for DWA representatives to meet with each of them.</p> <p>4.2 Ref 4.2: NS reported that the GTW '25 information sheets have been removed from all the DW information boards. Action closed.</p> <p>4.3 Ref 6.1: MC reported that the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) Junior Rangers Day was held on 22/02/26. All attendees had a fun day tidying up the Lynmore Bypass. Action closed.</p> <p>4.4 Ref 7.3.1: (See Item 7.2.1 below)</p> <p>4.5 Ref 7.3.2: (See Item 7.2.2 below)</p> <p>4.6 Ref 7.3.3: (See Item 7.3.2 below)</p> <p>4.7 Ref 7.3.4: (See Item 7.3.3 below)</p> <p>4.8 Ref 7.3.5: (See Item 7.3.4 below)</p> <p>4.9 Ref 7.4.1: (See Item 7.4.1 below)</p>	MC

4.10	Ref 7.4.2: (See Item 7.4.2 below)	
4.11	Ref 7.4.3: (See Item 7.4.3 below)	
4.12	Ref 7.4.4: (See Item 7.4.4 below)	
4.13	Ref 7.5.1: (See Item 7.5.1 below)	
4.14	Ref 7.5.2: (See Item 7.5.2 below)	
4.15	Ref 8.1.1: (See Item 8.1.1 below)	
4.16	Ref 8.1.2: (See Item 8.1.2 below)	
4.17	Ref 8.2: (See Item 8.2 below)	
4.18	Ref 8.3.1.1: (See Item 8.3.1.1 below)	
4.19	Ref 8.3.1.2: (See Item 8.3.1.2 below)	
4.20	Ref 8.3.1.4: (See Item 8.3.1.3 below)	
4.21	Ref 8.3.3.2: (See Item 8.3.2 below)	
4.22	Ref 10.1.1: (See Item 10.1 below)	
4.23	Ref 12.1: (See Item 12.1.1 below)	
4.24	Ref 13: (See Item 13 below)	
4.25	Ref 14: (See Item 9.1.2 below)	
5	<u>Treasurer's Report</u>	
5.1	PB reported that a balance of £6,559.08 is in the DWA account. Unrestricted Funds: £ 6,559.08 Restricted Funds: £ Nil	
5.2	Significant Income: £ Nil	
5.3	Significant Expenditure: £ Nil	
5.4	Anticipated Expenditure (from DWA funds): £ ~150.00 to MIS; purchase of replacement rough cutter blade.	
5.5	Anticipated Income (from external funding): £ Nil	
5.6	Anticipated Expenditure (covered by external funding): £ Nil	
5.7	Donations via the GiveWP-Stripe process since last meeting: £ Nil	
6	<u>Correspondences</u>	
6.1	To the Secretary (Nothing to report)	
6.2	Other Correspondence	
6.2.1	PB reported that he received an email from Caitlin Erskine of Seafield Estate regarding their proposed timber harvesting at Dava. He is meeting her on site on 14/04/26 to discuss any potential impact on the DW.	PB
6.2.2	TH reported that he has received an email from Rob Prigg of the Railway Ramblers with further details regarding a ramble up the DW, to be held in May. There will be 8 walkers. TH will liaise with Rob Prigg and provide any information as requested.	TH
7	<u>Dava Way Path Works and Equipment Maintenance</u>	
7.1	Unplanned Work Since Last Meeting	
7.1.1	PM reported that on 12/02/26 he and TT prepared two more galvanised steel gate posts ready for welding. These posts have since been welded and are ready for use when required.	

7.1.2	PM reported that on 25/02/26 he, TT and Greg MacAulay felled and cleared the trees over the drainage pipe in Belnain Wood and cleared 3 windblown trees at the Dunphail Breathing Place.	
7.2	Planned Work Since Last Meeting	
7.2.1	Ref 7.3.1: PM reported that the following works were carried out at the full work party held 14/02/26: Balvlair Crossing to BBC Breathing Place Dunphail. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back gorse/whins and cleared minor ditch on west side of cutting. • Surveyed site for digger works to clear ditch on east side of cutting. Mannachie to Dallas Dhu. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scraped muddy sections and raised with sub-base. North of Longley Crossing. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finished filling rut with sub-base. Action closed.	
7.2.2	Ref 7.3.2: PM reported that he liaised with Greg MacAulay regarding removal/pruning of trees at the location of the drainage pipe blockage in the cutting south of the Sluggan Burn (See Item 7.1.2 above). Action closed.	
7.3	Priorities for Next Work Party and Mini Work Parties	
7.3.1	PM proposed that the following works be considered priorities for the full work party to be held 14/03/26: Auchearn Cutting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut back gorse/whins and clear minor ditch on west side of cutting. • Remove spoil. Mannachie to Dallas Dhu. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top off sub-base with quarry dust. Agreed unanimously. PM will make the necessary arrangements.	PM
7.3.2	Ref 7.3.3: Action held over. PB will contact the relevant estate manager and request an on-site meeting to discuss options to resolve the flooding issues that have resulted in erosion of the path surface between Balvlair and Dunphail. Dependent on the adjacent ditches having been cleared.	PB
7.3.3	Ref 7.3.4: Action held over. NS will treat the oak benches with teak oil when possible.	NS
7.3.4	Ref 7.3.5: Action held over. NS will inspect the damage to the nose of the Redcoat sculpture and see what can be done to repair it.	NS
7.3.5	NS reported that the fencing either side of the Castle Grant Halt bridge parapet needs repair/replacement. There was some discussion about who actually owns the bridge, a Category A listed building (LB349), and is responsible for its upkeep. One option is National Highways, who look after the Historical Railways Estate (HRE) of disused railway bridges that pass under or over public roads. Another option is that the bridge structure is considered part of the adjacent listed buildings, Castle Grant East Lodge and entrance arch, and maintenance is the responsibility of the owner of that property. MC will contact the owner of the lodge and enquire if they also own the bridge.	MC
7.4	Signage	
7.4.1	Ref 7.4.1: Action held over. PB will tabulate a bill of materials and obtain a total cost for fixing waymarker signs to lamp posts and street signs, to replace the wooden waymarker posts between the Tolbooth and Mannachie Avenue.	PB
7.4.2	Ref 7.4.2: Action held over. NS will manufacture a new information board frame to the standard design and arrange for its installation adjacent to the Dullicht Bridge.	NS

7.4.3	NS reported that he has reinstalled the repaired fingerpost adjacent to the Forester's Cottage at Woodside. Action closed.	
7.4.4	Ref 7.4.4: Action held over. NS will repair the damaged Dunphail fingerpost and arrange for its reinstallation.	NS
7.5	Tooling and Equipment	
7.5.1	Ref 7.5.1: Action held over. PB will invoice the Forres Community Woodland Trust (FCWT) for the recent repairs to the rough cutter.	PB
7.5.2	Ref 7.5.2: PB reported that he has added a 19mm spanner to the chipper toolkit. Action closed.	
8	Project Reports	
8.1	Dava Bypass Project	
8.1.1	Ref 8.1.1: Action held over. PB will seek specialist advice from Paths for All re path design constraints regarding private water supplies.	PB
8.1.2	Ref 8.1.2: Action held over. PB will liaise with Tom Brinicombe, Ourack Wind Farm developer Vattenfall representative, to arrange a meeting for early in 2026 to put some further detail into the DWA proposals for improvements to the Dava Way, as part of the planning permission for the wind farm. NB: There are three planning constraints for works affecting the DWA - Constraint 23. The development of an Outdoor Access Plan to secure public access rights during and after wind farm development. Constraint 24. The development of a scheme to improve and enhance the Dava Way. Constraint 28. The development of a scheme for the provision of off-site road works at Castle Grant, including full details of the works affecting the Dava Way.	PB
8.2	PB reported that the meeting will take place on 16/03/26. Dava Way Counter Project Ref 8.2: Action held over. TH will obtain the appropriate components and build a test counter device (see Reddit article) as a winter project, with assistance from NS as required. NS displayed an assembled counter and announced that he and TH would, hopefully, be programming and testing the counter on the following day.	TH/NS
8.3	Ghost Train Walk 2027	
8.3.1	COTAG feedback:	
8.3.1.1	Ref 8.3.1.1: MC reported that the Zoom meeting with the Community Off-Road Transport Action Group (COTAG) took place 17/02/26. Comments were documented in a report circulated to DWA Trustees. Action closed.	
8.3.1.2	Ref 8.3.1.2: Action held over. PM will update the DWA emergency maps.	PM
8.3.1.3	Ref 8.3.1.4: Action changed. Rather than have PM design large, brightly coloured tags, to identify the various access gate keys and wrap reflective tape around the DWA padlocks, it was suggested that combination locks be used for the duration of the event. MC then proposed that, for the simplest solution, the gates just remain unlocked for the duration of the event. Agreed unanimously, subject to landowner agreement. MC will discuss this option with the landowners.	MC
8.3.2	GTW publicity: Ref 8.3.3.2: MC reported that he has uploaded a report on the GTW to the DWA Facebook page. Action closed.	
8.3.3	TH reported that he contacted SPORTident UK to obtain an estimate of how much it would cost for them to manage ticket sales using SiEntries and monitor participant progression through four checkpoints. They have provided	

	an estimate of £2,865.89. TH suggested that this option is something to think about, as having a third party run the event would free up the DWA Trustees and volunteers to focus on other tasks.	
9	<u>Health and Safety</u>	
9.1	First Aid Kits	
9.1.1	The DWA first aid kits are held by MC, PB and PM. The completeness and serviceability of each kit was confirmed.	
9.1.2	Ref 9.1.2: RR reported that he has purchased the bivy bags and has issued them to the first aid kit custodians. Action closed.	
9.1.3	RR reported that funding for the purchase of defibrillators is available from several organisations and, as we often work in remote locations, proposed that the DWA should have one available for use on work parties. Agreed unanimously. MC will confirm whether funding is available to purchase defibrillators for mobile use, as opposed to having to mount them to publicly accessible buildings.	MC
9.2	Training (Nothing to report)	
9.3	Injury Reports and Incidents (Nothing to report)	
9.4	Documentation Review (Nothing to report)	
10	<u>Business Planning</u>	
10.1	DWA Strategic Business Planning Ref 10.1.1: Action held over. A subcommittee comprising MC, PM, TT and Andrew Calder will review the DWA Strategic Business Plan, and draft a budget forecast and funding strategy covering the next five years. MC reported that the first meeting of the subcommittee was held 18/02/26 at the Erskine Activity Centre, Forres. A redraft of the plan is in progress.	MC/PM/TT & A Calder
10.2	Trustee Membership and Supporter Roles (Nothing to report)	
10.3	Succession Planning (Nothing to report)	
11	<u>Funding</u> (Nothing to report)	
12	<u>Social Media and Publicity</u>	
12.1	DWA Website	
12.1.1	Ref 12.1: Action held over. TH, NS and MC will form a sub-committee to review the DWA website pages.	TH/NS/MC
12.1.2	TT noted that he has come across several videos on YouTube promoting hiking, running and cycling along the DW. He suggested that the DWA website sub-committee consider providing links from the website to a selection of these videos.	
12.2	DWA Facebook Group PM reported that the DWA Facebook Group currently has 2753 members, with 150 followers of the related Facebook page.	
12.3	Local, Regional and National Publications (Nothing to report)	
12.4	External Websites and Social Media. (Nothing to report)	

13	<u>DWA Annual Dinner</u> Ref 13: Action held over. NS will make the necessary arrangements for a DWA annual dinner/barbecue later in 2026.	NS
14	<u>AOCB</u>	
14.1	PM proposed that a cycle survey of the DW be completed prior to the start of the tourist season. Agreed unanimously. PM will make arrangements for a cycle survey.	PM
14.2	TT proposed submitting a bid to the Berry Burn Community Fund (BBCF) in May, for match funding to purchase a compact tractor and various implements. RR queried whether such machinery would provide adequate benefit for its cost and expressed concern about meeting the potential ongoing costs for insurance, maintenance, etc. TT will draft a detailed business case and circulate it to the DWA Trustees for their consideration. The next deadline for bids to the BBCF is in September for an October decision.	TT
14.3	TT reported that he has received emails from Dropbox warning him that the DWA have exceeded to 2GB free storage allowance. TH offered to review the content of the DWA Dropbox and discard/archive items as appropriate.	TH
14.4	TH noted that he has extensive knowledge and expertise in the field of computing and offered support to the DWA Trustees should they need his assistance with 'tidying' electronic documents, etc.	
15	Date of the Next Meeting: 19:00 14/04/26, at the Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG.	

Meeting Closed: 21:20



Neil Sinclair
Chairman
Dava Way Association