THE DAVA WAY ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting held 13th October 2026

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

Meeting Opened: 19:00

Item	Minute		Action By
1	Welcome:	Neil Sinclair chaired the meeting and welcomed members.	
2	Present:	Malcolm Campbell (MC), Michael J Sutherland (MS), Neil Sinclair (NS), Paul Barron (PB), Pete Mitchell (PM), Robbie Roberts (RR), Trevor Thornley (TT).	
	Apologies:	Tim Heaps (TH). Andrew Calder (AC).	
3	Minutes of the previous meeting held on 8th September 2026 The minutes of the previous Dava Way Association (DWA) BoT meeting were read and accepted without change. Proposed: MC Seconded: RR		
4	Matters Arising from the previous meeting		
4.1	Ref 4.1:	PM noted that it was now too late in 2026 to hold a one-off cycle survey of the Dava Way (DW). Any issues requiring immediate attention are invariably reported by the DWA Trustees or other path users, so PM proposed postponing the cycle survey until 2027. Agreed unanimously. Action closed.	
4.2	Ref 4.2:	MC reported that he has contacted Hector Bryden, Moray Council Outdoor Access Manager, and has discussed the points raised in the survey of the DW carried out by Graham Findlay, Moray Council Countryside Ranger. Action closed.	
4.3	Ref 5.8:	(See Item 5.8 below)	
4.4	Ref 6.1.2:	Action held over. MC will arrange a meeting with the Murphy Infrastructure project manager to discuss the project and any potential support that could be available to the DWA. MC reported that the initial correspondent, Christine MacFarquhar, has confirmed that the project manager will contact the DWA in due course.	MC
4.5	Ref 7.3.1:	(See Item 7.2.1 below)	
4.6	Ref 7.3.2:	(See Items 7.1.1 and 7.1.2 below)	
4.7	Ref 7.3.3:	(See Item 7.3.2 below)	
4.8	Ref 7.3.4:	(See Item 7.3.3 below)	
4.9	Ref 7.4.1.1:	(See Item 7.4.1.1 below)	
4.10	Ref 7.4.1.2:	(See Item 7.4.1.2 below)	
4.11	Ref 7.4.2:	(See Item 7.4.2 below)	
4.12	Ref 7.4.3:	(See Item 7.4.3 below)	
4.13	Ref 8.1.1:	(See Item 8.1.1 below)	
4.14	Ref 8.1.2:	(See Item 8.1.2 below)	
4.15	Ref 8.2:	(See Item 8.2 below)	
4.16	Ref 8.3.1:	(See Item 8.3.1 below)	

4.17	Ref 8.3.2: (See Item 8.3.2 below)	
4.18	Ref 8.3.3: (See Item 8.3.3 below)	
4.19	Ref 8.3.4: (See Item 8.3.4 below)	
4.20	Ref 8.4.1: (See Item 8.4.1 below)	
4.21	Ref 8.4.2: (See Item 8.4.2 below)	
4.22	Ref 8.4.4.1: (See Item 8.4.3.1 below)	
4.23	Ref 8.4.4.2: (See Item 8.4.3.2 below)	
4.24	Ref 8.4.4.3: (See Item 8.4.3.3 below)	
4.25	Ref 8.4.5: (See Item 8.4.4 below)	
4.26	Ref 8.4.6: (See Item 8.4.5 below)	
4.27	Ref 9.1.2: (See Item 9.1.2 below)	
4.28	Ref 9.2.1: (See Item 9.2.1 below)	
4.29	Ref 9.2.2: (See Item 9.2.2 below)	
4.30	Ref 10.1.1: (See Item 10.1.1 below)	
4.31	Ref 10.1.2: (See Item 10.1.2 below)	
4.32	Ref 10.3: (See Item 10.3 below)	
4.33	Ref 11.1: (See Item 11.1 below)	
4.34	Ref 11.2: (See Item 11.1 below)	
4.35	Ref 12.1.1: (See Item 12.1 below)	
4.36	Ref 14.1.1: (See Item 13.1 below)	
4.37	Ref 14.1.1: (See Item 13.2 below)	
5	<u>Treasurer's Report</u>	
5.1	PB reported that a balance of £7,546.18 is in the DWA account. Unrestricted Funds: £ 7,546.18 Restricted Funds: £ Nil	
5.2	Significant Income: £ 243.56 from Forres Community Woodland Trust (see Item 5.8 below)	
5.3	Significant Expenditure: £ 175.00 to MH Creations; website hosting and services	
5.4	Anticipated Expenditure (from DWA funds): £ Nil	
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: £ 25.00	
5.8	Ref Item 5.8: PB reported that the invoice sent to the Forres Community Woodland Trust for their share of the rough cutter repair costs has been paid. Action closed.	
6	<u>Correspondences</u>	
6.1	**To the Secretary** (Nothing to report)	
6.2	**Other Correspondence** (Nothing to report)	
7	<u>Dava Way Path Works and Equipment Maintenance</u>	
7.1	**Unplanned Work Since Last Meeting**	
7.1.1	Ref 7.3.2a: PM reported that on 10/09/26 he replaced the rotted step adjacent to the Sanquhar Mains Farm Bridge. Action closed.	

7.1.2	Ref 7.3.2b: PB reported that on 18/09/26 he filled the hole in the path surface south of the flood alleviation bund near Forres. Action closed. RR reported that on 19/09/26 he added more material to the hole in the path surface south of the flood alleviation bund near Forres and levelled a dip nearer the bund with the remaining material he had taken.	
7.1.3	PM reported that on 19/09/26 he fitted galvanised bases to replacement posts for the Dava station sign.	
7.1.4	PM reported that on 22/09/26 he fitted an anti-slip GripStrip to the replaced step adjacent to the Sanquhar Mains Farm Bridge.	
7.1.5	PM reported that on 26/09/26 he painted the replacement posts for the Dava station sign.	
7.1.6	PM reported that on 25/09/26 he, PB, TT, Al Hughes and Tom Summerscales progressed ditching works in the Balvlair cutting. A carpet of vegetation on the east side of the cutting was peeled back to the path edge and removed, exposing the original drainage pipes and enabling rainwater to flow off the path and towards the pipes.	
7.1.7	NS reported that he has refurbished the Dava station sign, repainting it in the original Highland Railway colour scheme of blue and white. NS will arrange a mini work party to reinstall the sign.	NS
7.1.8	PM reported that on 30/09/26 he, PB, TT and Al Hughes progressed further ditching works in the Balvlair Cutting.	
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 12/09/26: Section of DW between Dava and Heatherbells Cutting. • Cut back gorse and whins as required. • Applied a smooth quarry dust surface to the subbase added to ruts and potholes on previous work parties. Section of DW between Mrs Coutts cottage and the Dava railway cottages. • Cut back encroaching vegetation as required and cut grass. Action closed.	
7.2.2	PM reported that the following works were carried out at the full work party held 10/10/26: Section of DW in Balvlair Cutting and adjacent to BBC Breathing Place. • Cut back gorse and whins as required. • Strimmed west side of cutting north of Laurels Bridge. • Peeled back and removed carpet of vegetation on west side of cutting north of Laurels Bridge to the path edge, allowing water to drain off path. • Cleared ditches on east and west side of path south of Laurels Bridge. • Rodded drainage pipe on east side of Balvlair Cutting from Balvlair Crossing to Laurels Bridge; single tree root blockage to be investigated later.	
7.3	**Priorities for Next Work Party and Mini Work Parties**	
7.3.1	PM proposed the following as priority works be carried out at the full work party to be held 14/11/26 and mini work parties where possible: Section of DW in Balvlair Cutting north of Laurels Bridge. • Strim remainder of west side of cutting. • Remove remaining vegetation carpet on cutting west side. • Reinstate ditch on west side of cutting. • Clear west-east cross-drain pipes. • Complete works to remove carpet of vegetation on cutting east side.	

	• Progress auxiliary ditch reinstatement on cutting east side. Section of DW on 'Rooty Rollercoaster': • Stabilise loose gravel and smooth off with quarry dust. Section of DW adjacent to Dallas Dhu distillery: • Cut back encroaching gorse and whins as required. Agreed unanimously. PM will make the necessary arrangements.	PM
7.3.2	Ref 7.3.3: PB proposed that the action for him to 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 be closed. The action is dependent on the adjacent ditches having been cleared (see Item 7.3.1 above) and monitored for subsequent flooding. PB will contact the estate manager if appropriate. Agreed unanimously. Action closed.	
7.3.3	Ref 7.3.4: 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
7.4	**Signage**	
7.4.1	Forres waymarker signage.	
7.4.1.1	Ref 7.4.1.1: 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
7.4.1.2	MC and PB asked TT to clarify his previous observation re the appropriate colour for DW directional signage erected adjacent to the public highway. TT stated that signage to be installed adjacent to a public highway or thoroughfare requires approval from the roads department of the appropriate local authority (LA) and, though green and white directional signage has been installed at various times in the past, the LA have latterly stipulated the installation of brown and white tourist signage. According to the Trunk Road and Motorway Tourist Signing Guidance from Transport Scotland "A tourist signs purpose is to direct people [drivers] to a tourist destination in the final stages of their journey". According to the Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access from Paths for All/NatureScot "Directional signage … covers any sign which helps users to find their way **to** or along a path or route". The proposed waymarker signage (see Item 7.4.1.1 above) will be there to direct path users along the route thus, in TT's opinion, the signage should be the green and white directional signage.	
7.4.1.3	Ref 7.4.1.2: Action held over. TT asked MC to seek guidance from Hector Bryden, Moray Council Outdoor Access Manager, and Adam Streeter-Smith, CNPA Recreation and Access Manager, when he next contacts them on other matters.	MC
7.4.1.4	TT suggested that PB make the LA aware of the Signage Guidance for Outdoor Access from Paths for All/NatureScot when he seeks approval from the LA for installation of the Forres waymarker directional signage.	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	Ref 7.4.3: Action held over. PM will monitor the situation with the displaced DW parking sign adjacent to Edinkillie Village Hall and make arrangements to reinstall the sign is this is not carried out by the contractor.	PM

7.5	**Tooling and Equipment** TT reported that one of the draw forks was temporarily misplaced during a recent full work party. The wooden handle and iron head are dark in colour, and such tools are easily hidden amongst vegetation. TT asked RR if he could apply a band of bright orange paint to such tools, as he did with the rakes. RR agreed that he would purchase suitable paint and apply it to the affected tools.	RR
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 is awaiting details from Tom Brinicombe, Ourack Wind Farm developer Vattenfall representative, re the formation of the Community Liaison Group.	PB
	Note: 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.	
8.2	**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), with assistance from NS as required.	TH/NS
8.3	**Ghost Train Walk 2027**	
8.3.1	Ref 8.3.1: Action held over. PM will update the DWA emergency maps.	PM
8.3.2	Ref 8.3.2: Action transferred. MC will pass the dates and other details for the 2027 Ghost Train Walk (GTW) to the organiser of the Moray Outdoor Festival.	MC
8.3.3	Ref 8.3.3: Action held over. PB reported that he has carried out some preliminary research into bus prices. He will submit a provisional order for qty 4 GTW buses in mid-November.	PB
8.3.4	Ref 8.3.4: Action held over. MC will discuss with TH using SiEntries to administer the event as an alternative to TicketTailor, with the intention of having event booking up and running by the beginning of 2027.	MC
8.4	**Compact Tractor Purchase Project**	
8.4.1	Ref 8.4.1: Action held over. The tractor sub-committee will draft a detailed business case for the tractor and implements.	TT/PB/PM
8.4.2	Ref 8.4.2: Action held over. The tractor sub-committee will submit a bid for match funding to the Berry Burn Community Fund (BBCF) to purchase a tractor (Kioti CK4030CH) with loader, 4-in-1 bucket and side-arm flail (budget £40,000); bid to be submitted to the BBCF by midnight 10/01/27, final bid deadline 13/01/27.	TT/PB/PM
8.4.3	Purchase of ISO canopy.	
8.4.3.1	Ref 8.4.4.1: TT confirmed the practicality of using a 4m wide by 6m long Kroftman canopy to store the tractor. There is space to store the tools trailer externally at the rear, accessed through the 2.8m high by 1.9m wide doors in the canopy, with the tipping trailer stored in the area to the south of the ISO containers. Action closed.	

8.4.3.2	Ref 8.4.4.2: TT reported that he provided PM with details for the tractor, the canopy and date of the next BBCF bid submission deadline. Action closed.	
8.4.3.3	Ref 8.4.4.3: PM reported that he has made a tentative approach to Finderne Development Trust (FDT) to enquire if they would be willing to fund the canopy purchase, in addition to the previously agreed training for the tractor operators. He confirmed that things look positive, but FDT have requested the submission of a formal bid for funding. Action closed.	
8.4.3.4	TT and MC will approach the sawmill manager to informally request permission to install the canopy.	TT/MC
8.4.3.5	TT and MC will obtain a formal quote for purchase of the canopy.	TT/MC
8.4.3.6	TT will research the availability and cost of a tractor wheel clamp.	TT
8.4.3.7	PM will research the cost of installing a security gate in front of the canopy.	PM
8.4.3.8	MC will arrange a formal meeting with Altyre Estate to obtain written permission to install the canopy and discuss whether there are ways the DWA can help support the objectives of the estate development plan.	MC
8.4.3.9	PM and MC will submit a formal bid for canopy funding to the FDT.	PM/MC
8.4.4	Ref 8.4.5: Action held over. MC will ask the Estates, and LA Access Officers, if they would be willing to help the DWA by using their equipment or contractors to remove the more well-established stands of broom and gorse. Costs could be shared or bartered against DWA improvements to estate tracks and drainage.	MC
8.4.5	Ref 8.4.6: Action held over. PM is awaiting a response from Altyre Estate re obtaining their written agreement to opening up the cutting north of the Squirrel Neuk bridge.	PM
9	Health and Safety	
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: Action held over. MC reported that no funding has been made available for the Scottish Government scheme to help organisations purchase defibrillators. MC proposed that he approach Tesco for funding. Agreed unanimously. MC will approach Tesco for funding through the next round of their Bags of Help community fund.	MC
9.2	**Training**	
9.2.1	Ref 9.2.1: Action held over. PM will investigate the availability and cost of mini-digger operator training courses.	PM
9.2.2	Ref 9.2.2: PB reported that he has researched the availability and cost of courses for the Level 2 Award in the Safe Use of Pesticides (PA1 & PA6) plus the add-on module for spraying near watercourses. Action closed. Ringlink are the most cost-effective supplier, but the total cost of £930 is higher than anticipated. PB proposed that he go ahead and book the courses with Ringlink, to be held 20-21/01/27. Approved unanimously. PB will book and attend the training courses.	PB
9.3	**Injury Reports and Incidents** (Nothing to report)	
9.4	**Documentation Review** (Nothing to report)	
10	Business Planning	
10.1	**DWA Strategic Business Planning**	
10.1.1	Ref 10.1.1: Action held over. A subcommittee comprising MC, PM, TT and AC will review the DWA Strategic Business Plan and draft a budget forecast and funding strategy covering the next five years.	MC/PM/TT & AC

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10.1.2	Ref 10.1.2: Action held over. MC will refer to historic spending by the DWA and draft a budget forecast based on this information.	MC
10.2	**Trustee Membership and Supporter Roles** (Nothing to report)	
	Succession Planning	
10.3	Ref 10.3: PM reported that he has contacted the FDT and suggested that they consider the establishment of a full-time ranger post. They were not keen on the idea as they did not see it as providing a return on investment. Action closed.	
11	Funding	
11.1	Ref 11.1 and 11.2: Actions held over. MC will contact CNPA to enquire about funding to improve the Dulicht Bridge ramp; ref Visitor Infrastructure Improvement Fund or the Cairngorms 2030 Communities Fund.	MC
11.2	MC will contact Seafield Estate to assess their support for the proposed Dulicht Bridge ramp improvements.	MC
12	Social Media and Publicity	
12.1	**DWA Website** Ref 12.1.1: Action held over. TH, NS and MC will form a sub-committee to review the DWA website pages.	TH/NS/MC
12.2	**DWA Facebook Group** PM reported that there are now almost 3000 members of the Facebook group Friends of the Dava Way, and 184 followers of the related page.	
12.3	**Local, Regional and National Publications** MC reported that the Dava Way was featured in a Guardian article 10/09/26 entitled Make tracks: 8 of the UK's best walking and cycling trails on former railway lines.	
12.4	**External Websites and Social Media.** (Nothing to report)	
13	DWA Annual Members Meeting The DWA Annual Members Meeting (AMM) will be held 19:30 26/11/26 at the Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG	
13.1	Ref 14.1.1: MC reported that he has confirmed the AMM venue booking with the Royal British Legion secretary. Action closed.	
13.2	Ref 14.1.2: PB presented the draft Trustees Annual Report (TAR) to the DWA Trustees for approval. Approved unanimously. Action closed.	
13.3	The TAR – Appendix 1 is to be signed off by the DWA Chair.	PB/NS
13.4	The TAR – Appendix 2 is to be signed off by the DWA Treasurer.	PB
13.5	MC stated that he will notify the members about the date of the AMM and will circulate the associated 'document pack' as soon as it is available.	MC
14	AOCB (Nothing to report)	
15	Date of the Next Meeting: 19:00 10/11/26, at the Royal British Legion, Sanquhar Road, Forres, IV36 1DG.	

Meeting Closed: 21:00



Neil Sinclair
Chairman
Dava Way Association