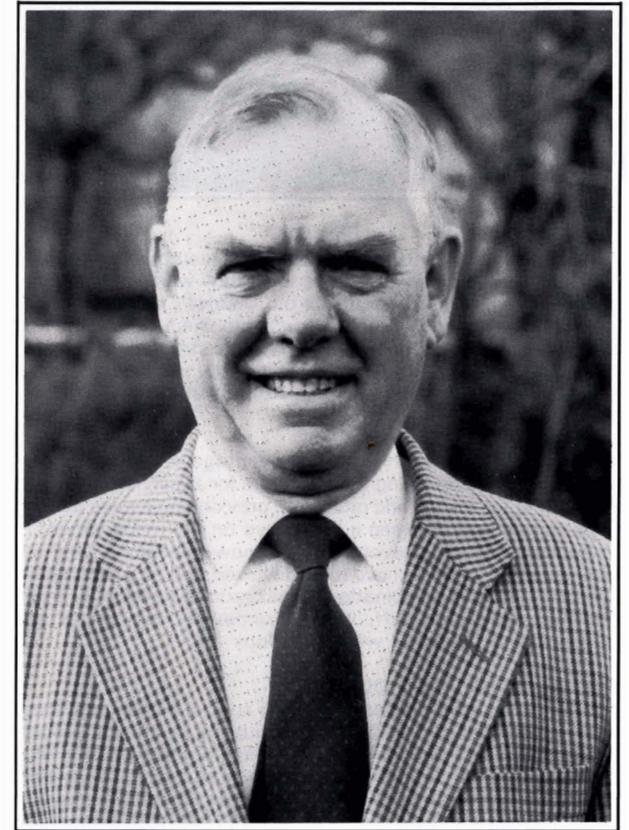


HIGHLAND COUNCIL ELECTION  
— APRIL 6, 1995



Vote for  
**DUNCAN  
ALLAN**

V O T E

<b>ALLAN</b>	<b>X</b>
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ON APRIL 6



### THE ELECTION

At this election you will choose your member for the new Highland Council. He will represent the new ward of the unitary authority, which consists of the old District Council wards of Dornoch Burgh and Dornoch District combined. During the first year, the shadow council will establish the structure of the new council and assemble the staff to run it, ready to take over control of all local authority functions in April 1996.

### HIGHLAND COUNCIL

A single-tier authority has the advantage of one councillor, living locally, representing the electorate for all services. It should be cheaper for the tax and ratepayer, provided no empire building is permitted and we keep a beady eye on the management of in-house contracts. Devolvement of power locally is vital but to ensure this, budgets have to be devolved, too, or talking shops will be created. A combination of maximum discretion for front-line managers and staff, with a framework for control and accountability, is what we should look for.

### SOCIAL WORK AND HOUSING

We have already started to provide special housing for those with special needs. A 40 bedroom nursing home will be built in The Meadows and will include a day-care facility. It is time that we stopped shuttling old folk back and forth to Golspie. Seven houses were built by a Housing Association for sale to first-time buyers and the District Council has at last agreed to do something similar, after two years of prodding; new ideas



are not readily accepted. Building plots were sold to locals at modest prices, and the construction of private houses proceeds steadily throughout the district. The recent housing survey in Sutherland confirmed that the stock of older owner occupied houses needed improvement by the provision of grants.

### EDUCATION

We have a thriving Primary School, whose roll increased by 11% over the last 10 years. The population of Dornoch locality rose by 20% during the same period, so we have an expanding population, despite the unjust restrictions placed upon us for so long. They are not all elderly, as some would have it.

The governing body of Dornoch Academy is doing an excellent job and is truly accountable to parents, rather than to some remote authority in Inverness. I have always tried to support their ambitions for upgrading, as a good secondary school is absolutely essential for a thriving community. Once the Academy becomes a six-year school, it is the intention to encourage a community-based sports facility.



### PLANNING AND ROADS

I am frankly appalled at the neglect of Embo. Huge sums of money have been spent elsewhere in Sutherland, sometimes not greatly to the benefit of local people. I suspect that there has been a considerable amount of "decible planning," where the loudest voice wins the most money. The jetty is badly in need of repair and the whole village requires to be tidied up.

The dreadful state of Schoolhill and Macdonald Road in Dornoch must be rectified, traffic calming is wanted in Lonemore, and the approach road to Clashmore Hall is full of potholes. The pavements and lighting in High Street, Dornoch, need upgrading.

### DEVELOPMENT, LIBRARIES AND LEISURE

I can claim some credit for ensuring that a new Industrial Estate will be built in The Meadows and have helped the Heritage Society in its slow but steady progress to obtain a home, because we badly need an all weather tourist attraction. The libraries should be modernised, linking them all to a computer for easy accessing; modern technology can provide a wide range of information on screen.

Unemployment is far too high and Dornoch has taken some hard knocks recently, so the continued expansion of Grannie's and the new development at Skibo are most welcome. Golf has become big business with the prospect of a fourth 18-hole course and a golf driving range in this ward. Fifteen thousand visitors played Royal Dornoch last year.



### ENVIRONMENT

Dornoch Burn is once again being cleaned regularly and so is the sea shore adjacent to our 140 hectares of Common Land; we are hoping to acquire a beach award in 1995. Plans are in hand to take back the management of our Common Good Land, after 18 years of indifference and neglect. A committee consisting of elected representatives and tenants will oversee its administration, to ensure that much better care is taken of this priceless asset.

Waste disposal is not a romantic subject, although it produces a great deal of heat if a dump is sited near someone's house. The problem will not go away; indeed it will require the urgent attention of the new Highland Council and whatever the solution, it will be expensive.

### FUNDING

I have mentioned devolved budgets and it is too early to discuss expenditure, but let us hope that the opportunity is taken to sweep away many old-fashioned local authority structures. There are new agencies working in parallel, which handle large sums of money and we must learn to co-operate and work with them. The demand on services seems almost infinite but I believe that we should concentrate on providing core services to the highest standards. I would continue the policy of referring all matters relating to the Common Good Fund to the Community Council.

### CONCLUSION

As you can see from the brief outline that I have provided, there is much to be done and you will need an active and energetic Councillor to represent you. As one who is already on the District Council, understands the problems of the self-employed and the importance of tourism to the economy, I offer myself for election.

