

MINUTES
Public Meeting
Denman Island Community Back Hall
March 9, 2026

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Document History

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**DIRA Public Meeting
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February 9, 2026**

Present: Jenny Balke (Chair); Ron Wilson (Vice-Chair); Andrew Pringle (Secretary); and Tony Gregson (director); Stirling Fraser (Treasurer), Sam Borthwick (Director) and twenty-two members.

DIRA Business

1. **Call to order:** The meeting was called to order at 7:32 PM.
2. **Approval of Agenda:** A motion to accept the agenda was approved with no changes.
3. **Approval of Previous Public Meeting Minutes:** A motion to approve the minutes of February 9, 2026, was approved with no changes.
4. **Update on previous Speed-reduction motion**
5. **DIRA Website:** Sonia Murillo is fixing the problem with access to the main site.

Committee & Community Reports and Activities

Denman Growers and Producers Presentation

Doug Wright highlighted the following points:

- Basic goal of Denman Growers is “Denman Feeding Denman”.
- Up to 1950’s, 80% of food came from Vancouver island; now it is only 10% or even just 3%.
- Garden Club, Farm to Family, and Food Bank are all part of the grower environment.
- Saturday Market takes care of itself, but there has been a decline in the number of vendors selling farm produce.
- Denman used to produce a lot more grain. DIGPA is encouraging grain growing. To harvest wheat, they have purchased a small combine from China which is the only source for small-scale machinery no longer profitable to produce in North America. The approval process for the combine engine is a separate process that takes two years.
- DIGPA also puts on Seedy Saturday and the Apple and Nut festival.
- The Tool Library is a shared resource built up over the years with the help of Denman Works. To use the tools, you must belong the DIGPA.
- Fruit gleaning is no longer supported directly by DIGPA and is kept up by individuals.

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- The infrastructure of agricultural enterprises has really expanded. It now includes one winery, a couple of cideries, apiarists, tree nurseries, and orchards in addition to small farms and private gardens.
- Doug made special mention of Veronica Timmins for her work in organizing the growers.
- The growers market needs to have more value-added product beyond raw produce.
- The older generation of growers is aging out; farming has become more regulated, with expensive permits and multiple levels of government. It is very important to encourage more young people to become growers.

Denman Works Presentation

Tony Gregson described the activities of Denman Works Economic Enhancement Society.

- Denman Works has several program: Community Project Grants, the Denman Bus Service, Denman Island Marketing and Promotion, Resource Centre, Grant Facilitation, and Workshops.
- DW is tax-funded with a budget of \$62,000 a year.
- Grants are the most appreciated and reach out to all sectors.
- The Resource Centre is in the process of being upgraded to a community portal for information about living on Denman. This will include the Skills and Job directories. Skills has about 120 entries.
- Visit Denman Island is the top internet site for Denman Island. It is oriented to information of interest to visitors. It can also be searched using AI. DW has made a point of including more information about artists. Most enquiries are for accommodation.
- DIBS carried 4,400 passengers in 2025 and has a budget of \$132,000 with four drivers and a coordinator. In 2026 it will be offering seven-day a week service from May to October. Our goal is to run seven days a week all year.

Old School Presentation

Gloria Michin described activities of the Old School which was acquired by DIRA in 1993 on a ninety-nine-year lease of one dollar a year from the Islands Trust. The Old School rents out the recycling centre to Waste Management, and hosts the DCA Conservancy, Free Store, and the weavers. It has a new heat pump thanks to DICAN.

Islands Trust Monthly Update

Neither of the Denman Island local trustees could be present. The meeting was refereed to Trustee David Graham's Trustee Notebook in the March Flagstone.

Recreation Grants

Sharon Clarke outlined some concerns about the Recreation Grants.

- There is a clear definition of what constitutes recreation that limits what can be funded.
- Funding can include events and some operational expenses for facilities.
- The application process needs to be streamlined with an improved form and a more precise understanding of budget requirements which need only include the proposed activity, not the whole organization.
- There should also be improved accountability for end-results with a final report.

Public Forum

Proposed Changes to Trust Mandate

Grave concern was raised by "Trust Watch," represented by Graham Brazier, about a proposal to expand the mandate of the Islands Trust from preserve and protect to include such areas as housing, livelihoods, infrastructure, and tourism. A legal opinion from Don Lidstone, former Trust lawyer, states that the change "is prioritizing development over protecting and preserving the unique amenities and environment of the trust area." Apart from potential legal violation of the mandate, was the lack of transparency in the way the change in Trust policy was agreed which was at a closed door, in camera meeting of Trust Council in 2023.

As a consequence, two motions were passed and immediately dispatched to Trustees Sam Borthwick and David Green:

- The Denman Island Residents' Association (DIRA) public forum requests that the Trustees for Denman Island, on behalf of Denman Island Residents' Association, support the legal challenge of the draft Islands Trust Policy Statement sent to Trust Council on February 17th, 2026, by Don Lidstone KC, senior partner of Lidstone & Company.
- Also, the Denman Island Residents' Association (DIRA) public forum asks our Denman Trustees to please report back to the DIRA membership and state

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their stand on the legal challenge of the draft Islands Trust Policy Statement sent to Trust Council on February 17th, 2026, by Don Lidstone KC, senior partner of Lidstone & Company.

Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was carried at 9:00 PM.