

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom at 7.00pm
Wednesday 24th May 2023

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Colin Stevenson, Maud McIntyre,
Councillor Chris Birt
2 members of public.

- 1. Apologies** – Tom Forrest, Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Mat Webster, Alpin Stewart.
- 2. Minutes of the meeting on 25th April 2023**
Approved.
- 3. Matters arising from minutes of 25th April**

30mph signs in Fasaig – No information yet about when HC will install their 20mph signs, therefore SW will put up a couple of 30mph signs anyway.

Action: SW

Parapet repair to bridge by Wester Alligin – After being chased by both Cllr Birt and SW, last week HC roads team replaced part of the broken parapet with some breeze blocks. There are still gaps in the parapet and the old railing that remains is being held in place by climbing rope. It was agreed this would not prevent a serious accident and that the breeze blocks would disintegrate if hit, as they were before, by a heavy vehicle.

Cllr Birt agreed to take this up at an upcoming Ward 5 roads meeting.

Action: CB

Kinlochewe 20 mph zone – SW reported that following her submission to HC Policy Department using information from TF and MM setting out reasons why Kinlochewe meets many of the criteria required to qualify for a 20mph zone, HC have now reversed their initial decision and confirmed they will include Kinlochewe in the upcoming 20mph programme. The zone will cover the same stretches of the A832 and A835 as are currently included in the 30mph zone.

Initially this will be an 18 month trial delivered via a Temporary Road Traffic Regulation Order. Following the introduction of the new reduced speed limit, HC will keep an eye on speed data to see how it is going in terms of compliance. The data will then be reviewed when the time comes for the promotion of a permanent Road Traffic Regulation Order.

HC say they do have concerns regarding compliance as they think the feel of the road is not conducive to a 20mph limit. It was noted the “feel” of the road was not actually one of the stated criteria.

All agreed this is excellent news, and CH thanked TF and everyone else who has been involved over the last 20 years in trying to resolve the speeding issues in the village. Fingers crossed it happens.

Kinlochewe Toilet Signage – HC has still not installed the sign, although Andrew Bone has told MM it is on his radar. Cllr Birt agreed to chase.

Action: CB

Future guest speakers – Cllr Liz Kraft and the Woodland Trust have not yet been invited to speak at future TKCC meetings, pending meeting dates being agreed.

Action: CH/SW

HC Local Transport Strategy – MM has not yet completed the HC survey to provide feedback on HC's Case for Change report but will do so.

Action: MM

23/01775/FUL | Change of use of land to form allotments with parking area | Land 125M East of Anancaun Field Station Kinlochewe. CH sent comments on behalf of TKCC supporting this as agreed.

HC Consultee Access system – SW will look at this in due course.

Action SW

4. Treasurer's report

Not much change from last month - £10 expenditure on refreshments for the recent Community Development Plan feedback events. Of the £926.00 received in March from the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC) we have incurred expenditure to date of £374.65 on hall rental and refreshments at both Torridon and Kinlochewe. Current bank balance £2,517.48.

The 2022-23 accounts have been signed off by an independent resident so can be presented for approval at the AGM in June. Once approved, they will be submitted to HC which should release our 2023-24 grant.

5. Guest Speaker – Kate Earnshaw, NHS Scotland

Kate Earnshaw is District Manager for NHS Highland Adult Health & Social Care for the Skye, Lochalsh and Wester Ross district. Covers area up to Achiltibuie and islands including Skye, Raasay, Soay and some of the smaller isles. Kate has a shared role with operations manager, is involved a lot with work around the provision of community spaces and beds and, following the Ritchie report in 2018, regarding provision of out of hours services mainly in North Skye.

Her main focus is on project and remodelling services. She is currently working alongside the Howard Doris management team to project lead the care and support around tenancies for residents, and options for managing the centre going forward. There is considerable legal and administrative work to re-structure the existing joint venture that Howard Doris holds with various community partners, to enable NHS Highland to take on the tenancies, hopefully, in Autumn 2023.

Following the decision by the owners, Parklands, to close the Mo Dhachaidh Care Home in Ullapool, with a notice period of 13 weeks, Kate led the closure and transfer procedure to find alternative places for residents. A great deal of support was needed for residents and relatives during a very upsetting and difficult transition time. The closure was significantly improved from previous experience of other closures, and she felt the local community were supportive.

Regarding the Kyle Dental Practice closure, Kate obtained the following information from Alex Fraser, Service Development Manager, Dental Department, Inverness:

Throughout Scotland many practices are experiencing significant challenges recruiting Dentists to NHS vacancies. For rural areas such as Lochalsh this has intensified the recruitment challenges in place prior to Covid. The Skye & Lochalsh DP owner made the difficult decision to close the practice due to a combination of recruitment challenges and ongoing financial viability issues. All patients that were registered with the Skye & Lochalsh DP were transferred to the Portree Dental Care

practice. Whilst this may not be ideal for many patients it does provide them with registration. The only other practice accepting new NHS patients at present is in Invergordon.

The Old Sick Bay Dental Practice in Kyle has been unable to recruit a replacement Dentist following Lloyd Parsons retirement last year. This has resulted in the practice having to close both of its branch practices in Ullapool and Lochcarron. Those patients previously seen in Lochcarron will continue to be seen in Kyle.

In answer to questions from TKCC members and the floor:

- Long stay and respite care at the Howard Doris will be the responsibility of NHS Highland going forward. Day care will be community led with support from Kate.
- There are very few care homes in the West Coast area of the Highlands. In the independent/private care home sector, NHS Highland is not part of the decision process to close them, and smaller homes in remote rural areas are becoming no longer financially viable due to costs and staff recruitment/ accommodation challenges. However, NHS Highland are pulling together the Adult Social Care Strategy for over 65's to enable and support people to remain at home for as long as possible. For example, Albion Housing is leading the way with technology solutions in the home for those with a high risk of falling using movement sensors, movement monitors for checking use of the fridge, temperature monitors. Also a lot of work is being done with Aberdeen University on technology solutions to help with home living for the elderly.
- NHS Highland are working with HIE and community trusts to allocate NHS land for building houses. This was done in Applecross to enable 2 houses to be built specifically adapted for elderly/ disabled people to enable them to continue to live within the village, with community support and close access to the GP surgery. A long term aim for elderly care is to repeat the Applecross project within other communities.
- GPs are no longer responsible for administering Covid vaccinations due to a policy change by the Scottish Government GP Committee. A national policy was agreed to relieve GP surgeries from administering all types of vaccinations and instead vaccination teams have been set up to do this within locations in specific areas for local residents. Due to a lack of flexibility with this new system, TKCC members felt this had resulted in a lower take up of vaccinations in our area.
- There are no plans to provide out of hours services within the GP practice in the Torridon area. The practice offers very close communication with patients, is very flexible and an extended out of hours service is not viable for an area with a small population.

CH thanked Kate for her very useful presentation and information, and for providing us with a good line of communication. Kate is happy to answer any questions or offer help by email, and agreed to provide updates at future meetings.

6. Possible use of Covid funds

- *Dog poo bin.* MW suggested the purchase of a dog poo bin to be sited (out of residents' sightline) on the shore path in Torridon. TDCA is buying one for the Community Centre and as the price is cheaper for two, they have offered to split the cost with TKCC. NTS have offered to empty it on our behalf.

It was agreed that we should use to the Covid fund if SS considers it fits the remit for use, otherwise we should use TKCC general funds.

Action MW/SS

Bin surround - Torridon. The large bin has now been removed from the shore site and re-sited by the NTS Information Centre, leaving the smaller bin in the parking area. NTS have offered to build a wooden surround for this smaller bin if TKCC fund the materials. CS suggested a dry stone wall enclosure as a possible alternative, for better appearance and minimal maintenance. Members agreed to defer voting until costs are known.

Action: MW/AS

7. Correspondence received

- Local residents and others – Balgy bridge road closure, 31 May
On 31 May, HC intends to close the A896 at the Balgy Bridge to carry out an inspection of the bridge. The road will be closed from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs and from 13.00hrs to 15.30hrs.

The road is used a great deal by locals and visitors during normal daytime hours. Next week is the Spring Bank Holiday week bringing many visitors from other parts of the UK to this area, and the only diversion is an epic route.

It was agreed TKCC would contact HC to ask if the inspection and closure could take place later in the day in order to minimise disruption.

Action: SW

- Fraser Conall – New HC Access Ranger
Fraser is a new HC Access Ranger working with Gregor Watson. His role is seasonal and will run until the end of September. He is keen to collaborate with community members and groups to ensure visitors follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.

He has offered to speak at a TKCC meeting to learn more about our area and discuss any concerns or issues the community may have. We have therefore invited him to attend the TKCC meeting in June.

- Scottish Boundaries Commission
Boundaries Scotland is undertaking its Second Review of Scottish Parliament boundaries. The consultation on constituencies runs from 17th May to 17th June 2023. See <https://boundaries.scot/> for more information.

8. Planning/Licensing Applications

23/01905/PNO | Peatland restoration | Land 3815M NW Of Mast Site Coille Bhreac, Coulin Estate
Cllr Birt said HC wished to remind all community councils that we should be doing what we can to combat climate change. It was agreed that peat was an important means of carbon capture, and we had no comments on this application.

23/02366/FUL | Erection of log cabin for holiday letting | Land 80M SE Of 8 Diabaig Torridon
No comments. MM noted that access is now being taken into account by HC in relation to planning applications.

Application for Major Variation of Premises Licence - Torridon Community Centre
No comments.

9. TKCC elections - October 2023

Every 4 years, CC members are required to put their names forward if they wish to continue to stand and new members are asked to put their names forward. If there are more than 8 names in total, the process goes to a vote. HC runs the whole process, with the next one due in October 2023.

If any current members wish to stand down, please inform either CH or SW. We would also welcome and encourage any new members wishing to join us – please contact us via TKCC website to find out more about what the role involves.

Cllr Birt noted that Shieldaig no longer has a Community Council due to it falling below the minimum number of members required. TKCC members agreed it would benefit people in both areas if it resumed as many issues that need addressing are common to both and we could work together on them.

10. Any Other Business

Wester Ross Fisheries Trust has reported that a rare bivalve – *mimachlamys varia nivea* – (a type of scallop only found in the Western Isles) has been found in Loch Torridon. For more details of this and news of a dive the Trust has made in Upper Loch Torridon to look at the state of the maerl grassbeds, please contact Peter Jarosz at WRFT - petersnthonyjarosz@gmail.com

Next meeting: Wednesday 21st June at 7.00pm with AGM – in person at Kinlochewe Village Hall.