

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council Annual General Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday, 30th June 2021 at 7pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Tom Forrest (Treasurer), Steve Schnabel, Alpin Stewart, Sally Cook, Mat Webster, Chris Davies (Secretary), Colin Stevenson, Councillor Alex MacInnes

4 members of the public

1. Apologies

None

2. Minutes of 2020 AGM

Approved.

3. Chair's annual report

The attached was delivered orally by CH.

4. Financial statement for 2021 financial year

Deferred.

5. Election of office bearers

CH, CD and TF stood down as office bearers.

CH was re-elected as Chair, and SS was duly elected to take over the position of Treasurer.

The Committee thanked TF for all his commitment as treasurer over the preceding year, which had proved to be an especially busy period. TF and SS to arrange handover of duties.

CD agreed to continue as Secretary and was re-elected. Due to time constraints she requested support with the production of minutes. The Committee agreed that if a Minutes Secretary could not be found minute taking would rotate within the TKCC.

6. Provisional date for next AGM

6 June 2022.

Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council

AGM – 30th June 2021

Chair's Report

2020/21 has been a busy year for TKCC.

In June 2020, thanks to our grant from HIE's Supporting Communities Fund, we started distributing food and fuel vouchers to those in the community who, as a result of Covid, were finding it hard to cope financially. Over the next 3 months, we supported around 37 individuals from 23 households all over the area. By shopping locally, these in turn helped local businesses to continue to trade.

We provided funding for screens for cars in the Community Car Scheme. This enabled drivers to continue to offer transport to some of the most vulnerable people in our community, including for hospital and other appointments. Also, to help keep people safe, we provided a large amount of PPE, and installed sanitiser stations that we continue to maintain at the start of popular footpaths.

To achieve maximum benefit for the community, our aim has been to work closely with other organisations wherever possible. For example:

- we worked with the TDCA and NTS on upgrading and installing benches and signs on the footpaths behind Darroch Park and along the shore in Torridon;
- we secured funding from the Hickman Trust and HIE Communities Recovery Fund that enabled us to help the COW Trust and Medical Practice Fund maintain defibrillators for the area;
- to support the community through the current new influx of visitors, we obtained a grant from North Highland Initiative (the body behind NC500) for a large new refuse bin in Torridon; and
- we obtained funding from the NTS, Highland Council Discretionary Fund and North Highland Initiative to enable the public toilets in Torridon to re-open for the 2021 tourist season. This is in partnership with Highlife Highland.

None of this would have been possible without the fantastic help of volunteers, all of whose willingness to step up to the plate – not just for these projects but also supporting others through the worst days of Covid - really has been hugely appreciated. Our Local Hero awards only went a tiny way to express how much the community owes you.

Within TKCC, we have made progress as well. Using HIE grant money, we now have a new website and Facebook page. These are for all Community Council matters and other relevant information. We also have new email addresses and a dropbox for TKCC members. Most importantly, following interim elections last September and for the first time for many years, we are now up to our full complement of 8 Community Councillors.

At most of our meetings, we invite a representative from another organisation active in our area to give a short presentation. This enables us and members of the community to ask

questions and develop areas of co-operation. Organisations that have attended include MOWI, NTS, GALE, Police Scotland, COW Trust, Celtman and the Highland Council roads department.

We have also met separately with the Communities Housing Trust about possible new affordable housing for the area, and with the Highland Council about potential opportunities in relation to Torridon School.

These go to the heart of what we hope could be a sustainable development or action plan for the Torridon and Kinlochewe area. This will be a major focus for TKCC in the coming year and we have already initiated a process whereby a plan can be developed. We are doing this in conjunction with representatives from the TDCA, COW Trust, Kinlochewe Village Hall and other members of the community, and with support from the Scottish Community Development Centre.

As part of this, soon we plan to launch a community survey. This will be the start of a conversation with all local residents to give us a detailed view of what you feel about the area and what you believe is important to enable the community to thrive. The aim would be to work on priorities that you identify, and use the results of the survey to work with partners and public bodies to try to improve the services and facilities here.

The way in which local services and amenities are run is changing. I believe that community ownership is the way of the future, with funding shifting from government to community-based solutions funded by grants. To act on priorities and access this funding, we need a trust or other vehicle, as well as evidence of community support.

Please do complete the survey when it's available, and talk to any member of TKCC about anything you are concerned about. The more people who participate the better – for example, we can often lend our voice to local residents' concerns, whether it be about fishfarm noise or the lack of mobile coverage.

A large number of people complain about the state of the roads, and this has enabled us to be in frequent dialogue with the Highland Council. It is clear substantial investment is required, and we are pushing hard to get them to increase the budget and manpower for our area. We have had some successes, including work on the road through the glen and near Torridon Hotel, but we are aware there is still a huge amount for the Council to do.

Finally, I can't finish this report without referring to Covid and the huge impact this has had on everyone. When I delivered my last Chair's report in June 2020, we had been in lockdown for just 11 weeks, little did we know then that we would still be living under substantial restrictions 52 weeks on.

With that as a backdrop, I am particularly pleased that TKCC has managed to do as much we have in the last year. I believe that is a real testament to the dedication and hard work of all our members, as well as our partners, and those in the community who engage with us.

I would like to encourage everyone to continue to be part of our discussions. It really does make all the difference.