

Minutes of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday, 29 July 2020 at 8pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Tom Forrest (Treasurer), Anne Macrae, Colin Stevenson, Cllr. Alex MacInnes

Representatives from MOWI: Kate Stronach - Senior Environmental Analyst, Ruth Paterson - Environmental Analyst, Dougie Hunter - Technical Director, Alasdair Mackay – site manager, Loch Torridon

8 members of the public

1. Apologies: Mat Webster, Christine Davies (Secretary), Firefighter Emily John

2. Presentation by MOWI

A link to recording of the presentation and question/answer session is available online at the following link until 26th August

<https://us04web.zoom.us/rec/share/4-5VH-jQx01lUIXg0FraYokEOZTceaa80Cge-VZyhq3dHu88V24l2Fe2DhaGAec>

3. Minutes of meeting on 1st July 2020

Approved.

4. Matters arising

Ward Manager: HC has appointed Dot Ferguson as an interim Ward Manager to replace Robbie Bain.

Defibrillator: A new battery and pads have now been purchased and we are awaiting funds from the Hickman Trust. The unit has been offered to the COW Trust.

Action: MW

Campervan toilet waste facility: After some research, the TDCA has decided not to go forward with this at the Community Centre. It became clear it would need to include grey water and fresh water facilities, as well as appropriate washing facilities, all of which was felt to be too difficult to implement in a short timeframe. The possibility of TKCC and the TDCA making a joint application for the longer term under the Rural Tourism Infrastructure Fund will be discussed.

Action: CH/CD/Kevin Wood

Torridon campsite toilets: Highlife Highland say they have no current plans to open the toilets.

5. Treasurer's report

The current balance, as at 29 July, for the COVID funding after all expenditure to date stands at £7,425.53. The balance of other TKCC funds stands at £1,246.68, this includes the annual grant of £447.27 for 2020/21 that has been received from the HC.

Kinlochewe Hall has agreed to charge the same for our meetings held in the Hall as the TDCA charges for the Torrison Community Centre. This means we owe them £72.

6. Update on grant-funded Covid-19 initiatives

a. Food/fuel vouchers

37 individuals from 23 households are currently receiving support from the voucher fund. Spend to date is £4,560.48 (budget £8,500). It had been thought that with the return of visitors to the area, some people might have been able to come off the scheme, however this is not the case. Only 1 person has stopped claiming and they have been replaced by another, therefore there is no change in the total.

Everyone using the scheme will be advised that the money will not last until the end of September.

b. PPE

Nearly all the current stock of masks has been distributed. A small number of further masks has been ordered and we are expecting delivery of these in August. Spend to date is £5,573.27 (budget £5,700)

c. Website

CD is making good progress on building the new site which is expected to be ready to launch in the next few weeks. The site will be linked to a new TKCC Facebook page dedicated to TKCC news, there will be TKCC email addresses for committee members, and TKCC documents will be available to be accessed by members on a dropbox. The current TKCC Facebook page that is run by AM will be renamed something more generic to reflect its content.

Action: CD/AM

d. Driver screens

The insurance issues have now been resolved and the community car scheme is in the process of fitting the Driver Bubble screens into a large number of cars. The car scheme has assisted Gairloch Community Car Scheme to do something similar, and they achieved cost savings by ordering screens together. Spend to date £3,296.84 (budget £4,500).

e. Physical activity (in conjunction with TDCA)

Kevin Wood advised that volunteer working parties have commenced work on the footpaths around the old village above Torrison.

7. Local heroes initiative

This initiative is underway and appears to have been well received, with many of the recipients of the award so far saying how touched they are to have been recognised.

Members of the public are encouraged to continue with their nominations.

8. NC500 webinar

CH reported on the webinar she had attended. This was arranged by the organisers of NC500 ostensibly to discuss how NC500 can work with Community Councils to ensure communities have a level of confidence as visitors return to the region.

Unfortunately, CH felt the webinar had been largely a tick box exercise. She felt the meeting had been unstructured and with no clear agenda.

There were around 36 people on the call, however most people did not introduce themselves, therefore it was often unclear when people spoke whether they were from NC500, a Community Council or another organisation.

Sanitation and waste issues caused by visitors as a result of the popularity of NC500 was the principal issue discussed, with many Community Councils reporting the same problem. NC500 offered no solutions to this, and the basic message appeared to be if communities want more disposal facilities or public toilets, we need to build them ourselves.

NC500 was asked if they could use some of the profits generated by their activities to help pay for more infrastructure. This was met with an apparently dismissive response, with NC500 saying they would be delighted to do this provided communities were also prepared to share in their losses.

It was agreed this was very disappointing. HIE and Visit Scotland are the two public sector partners of NC500 and it was agreed we should contact HIE to make them aware. Tom M agreed to find the relevant person to contact.

Action: Tom M/CH

AM advised that Dan Rose-Bristow has become a director of NC500, and it was agreed we should talk to him as well.

Action: CH

9. Emergency Services report

Deferred until the next meeting.

10. Planning applications

Marine Fish Farm - mussel longlines - Land 300M NE Of Dubh Aird Torridon, Ref. No. 20/02637/FUL

TKCC is a statutory consultee on this application. Jane Dick advised that mussel farming is one of the most sustainable forms of fish farming. She agreed to look at the application and give us her thoughts.

Action: CH

11. AOB

a. Overnight parking in Diabaig

A number of residents have complained about campervans and caravans parking overnight in the public carpark on the shore. This has led to considerable sanitation problems with visitors using gardens as toilets, and human poo being found on the roadside and dumped in the only litter bin.

Alex M said the HC was very concerned about visitor sanitation and waste problems all over the area, and agreed to find out if they could put up a no overnight parking sign. He said unfortunately such signs are not currently legally enforceable, however the HC is looking at introducing relevant byelaws. This is currently working well in carparks on Skye.

It was agreed a sign could deter some visitors from parking overnight. Therefore if the HC cannot put one up, TKCC could do so instead.

Dominic Ridgway noted that HC and Transport Scotland removed all overnight parking signs in 2012 following a legal challenge by a visitor. Therefore HC may have a stockpile of signs available for use.

Action: Alex M

b. Funding for toilets

Alex M said the HC had a small amount of funding available to help keep public toilets open over the next few months. He will make sure Dot Ferguson contacts us about this.

Action: Alex M

c. Torridon

Tom M asked the HC for assistance with the following concerns from local residents.

Tom F agreed to add these to the list of road issues and send to the HC:

- Roadside verge cutting in Torridon
- Lack of a pavement/safe route for pedestrians between Torridon village and campsite. Tom F and AM said the HC had looked at extending the pavement before but for a variety of reasons, it had not proved possible. It was agreed there would be no harm in TKCC asking again
- Piles of seaweed on the track to Am Ploc

Action: Tom F

d. Postal address

The TDCA has kindly agreed that TKCC can use Torridon Community Centre as our postal address. This will avoid the problem of post going to individuals, some of whom are no longer even members. Kevin Wood was thanked very much for this.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 26th August.