

Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council

AGM – 15th June 2022

Chair's Report

A major focus for TKCC in 2021/22 was the community survey. In putting this together, we received invaluable support from the Scottish Community Development Centre (SCDC). We worked closely with representatives from Torridon and District Community Association, Community Out West Trust, Kinlochewe Village Hall and members of the community, including those who participated in our steering group and those who kindly completed a pilot version.

All these people played a vital role, not just in helping to draft the survey, but also in helping to encourage large numbers of people to complete it.

We launched the survey in October 2021 with events at Torridon Community Centre and Kinlochewe Hall that also showcased other local organisations and some of the many other activities going on in our community. They were amongst the first public events to be held in person since the advent of Covid and they were very well attended, with plenty of tea, coffee and cakes consumed.

The survey was available to complete online and in paper form. It asked the community for their thoughts on a large number of topics ranging from after school clubs to local food and possible community transport. It took almost an hour to work your way through, and I am very pleased to say 160 residents from across the area - nearly 50% of the population – participated. This gives us a fantastic platform to build on.

With the results of the survey now out, the steering group has expanded to include representatives from NTS, Wester Ross Biosphere and South West Ross Community Car Scheme. The group is evaluating the results with a view to working on priorities that the community has identified, discussing these with local stakeholders, and coming up with a draft development plan that will be put back to the community for further input.

SCDC is continuing to assist and guide us, and I would like to thank them very much indeed.

Another major focus for TKCC in 2021/22 has been the roads. After years of underinvestment by the Highland Council, all are agreed these are in a shocking state. Not helped by the increasing amount of heavy traffic that we are seeing on the A896, for example.

We have continued to put as much pressure as we can on the relevant authorities. In early 2022, this included preparing a detailed report on the situation and presenting it to the Highland Council. We attended a Ward 5 business meeting where we were given the opportunity to meet with all the Councillors in our area. We also drafted letters for the community to write to our elected representatives, both locally and nationally.

To date, these efforts have yielded some results with areas of road being patched and resurfaced, however it is clear very much more still needs to be done. With new Highland Councillors in place since May 2022, we will keep pushing.

In terms of supporting the community with other issues that may arise through planning or otherwise, we have continued to do our best. For example, in last year's report, I highlighted the funding that TKCC obtained to enable the public toilets in Torridon to re-open for the 2021 tourist season. Thanks to the tireless work of volunteers, we kept these going with Highlife Highland to the end of February 2022. Highlife Highland then took back full responsibility and they have remained open ever since.

We have added our voice to those who are complaining about unacceptable noise from the fish farm opposite Wester Alligin, commented on planning applications, and helped to persuade the authorities to move a proposed new telecoms mast, such that residents of Diabaig will soon obtain mobile coverage.

We have also played our part in helping others to try and improve life and facilities. For example:

- NTS is planning a new visitor centre at Torridon. They have asked the community for its views on possible designs and invited TKCC to be part of the panel that decides which one to take forward.
- NatureScot has produced a new code of conduct for visitors on Loch Maree. This was developed following discussions with TKCC and other local organisations and residents.
- Kishorn Port has recently asked us to join a community liaison group to help keep communities updated with their activities and improve information flow.
- We presented at a learning event held by SCDC to share our experience of undertaking a community survey with other communities.

Finally, I believe TKCC's profile has risen significantly over the last few years. In large part this has been down to my fellow TKCC members, and to the people who support and engage with us. I would like to thank everyone for the great work you continue to do, and to recognise too the contributions made by those who stood down from the community council this year.

Once again, I encourage everyone to be part of our discussions. It goes without saying, the more people who engage with us, the more that we can do for you.