

Minutes of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday, 1st July 2020 at 8pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Christine Davies (Secretary), Anne Macrae, Colin Stevenson, Tom Forrest (Treasurer), Mat Webster, Firefighter Emily John

4 members of the public

1. Apologies

Tom Mallows, Cllr. Alex MacInnes. Robbie Bain had also advised the committee that after working for the Highland Council for many years, he has now left the HC. The TKCC expressed their thanks on behalf of both the Committee and community for his strong support over the years and wished him well. TKCC is waiting to hear who will replace Robbie as Ward Manager.

2. Approval of minutes of meeting on 10th June 2020

Approved, subject to clarifying in Point 4 that the Hickman Trust had agreed to make a donation in respect of the new battery for the defibrillator.

Action: CD (done)

3. Matters arising

Planning applications

MOWI

CH advised that a response to our objection to the planning application had been received from Ruth Paterson of MOWI. Their response appeared to focus principally on what MOWI are doing globally rather than address issues about the Torridon site. However, MOWI had apologised about the noise of the generator at the site, and stated that a Noise Impact Assessment would be undertaken.

In consultation with local experts, a response has been sent back to the HC Planning Officer. He has acknowledged our response and advised that the issues we have raised go to the heart of the matter and that they will be considered carefully. He is currently awaiting data from Marine Scotland on sea lice impact.

Stephen MacIntyre, Head of Environmental Management at MOWI has agreed to attend the next meeting of the TKCC on 29th July. He will give a short presentation and answer questions from the committee and any members of the public who attend.

CD confirmed that she is setup to receive automated notifications of planning applications from HC.

CD confirmed a subscription to zoom had been setup for the TKCC and that all members should have received an invitation to join the account.

4. Financial Statement 2019/20

TF confirmed that the signed financial statement for 2019/20 had been sent to Robbie Bain. The statement shows that as at 4th April 2020 (financial year end) the TKCC balance stood at £1,234.56. Once accepted by the HC this should initiate payment of the 2020/21 Highland Council grant.

As the COVID funding was received in May this year, it will be reported in the 2020/2021 financial statement.

5. Treasurers Report including update on Covid funding spend

The current balance, as at 1 July, for the COVID funding after all expenditure to date stands at £13,820.13.

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. Total spend to date is £2,225.71 (total budget £8,500). Based on current demand the fund will not last until the end of September, however as the lifting of government restrictions has started some people may be able to come off the scheme. Everyone using the scheme has been advised that there will be a review at the end of July, to see if any adjustments to the scheme will be needed.

b. PPE

MW confirmed that hand sanitisers had been distributed to businesses that had remained open. Masks and sanitiser have been provided to the Community Centre, Kinlochewe Hall, the car scheme and volunteers within the community. Dispensers have been provided to the Community Centre and Kinlochewe Hall for the entrances. Once the government announcement concerning the 2 metre rule has been made we will consider how to distribute the remaining masks and sanitiser within the community.

The NTS have erected signs asking people to “ be respectful” and we will install sanitiser dispensers at key points in the area, e.g gates at the start of popular walking routes.

c. Website – CD thanked everyone for their feedback on the strawman for the website. She will now consolidate everyone’s input and circulate for next steps.

Action: CD

d. Driver screens – Driver Bubble driver screens are currently being tested by the community car scheme, and feed back to-date has been very positive. The car scheme is checking that using the screens will not affect insurance. Once this is confirmed further screens will be ordered. The compulsory wearing of masks has yet to be decided. CS kindly offered to help anyone who needs help installing the screens in cars.

e. Physical activity (in conjunction with TDCA)

Kevin Wood advised benches and tables are due for arrival on 21 July. A call for a volunteer group to start work on some of the activities and routes will be made shortly.

A question had been received from the Hickman Trust asking why the focus of the physical activity scheme is only in Torrington. TF had advised them this was a TDCA led initiative and therefore the focus is Torrington. However, consideration could be given to a future TKCC joint application for the wider area.

7. Emergency Services report

Emily John provided an update from the local fire crews. Kinlochewe had attended no incidents since the last meeting. Torridon had one call out to a road traffic accident on 20th June, bringing the total number of calls outs this year to 5. The Make the Call campaign is ongoing and is being featured in An Carrannach.

First responders continue to be stood down from service due to Covid-19 but 2 more volunteers have expressed an interest in joining the team, and these will be taken forward once the team is working again.

8. Defibrillators

Following the last meeting MW had spent a lot of time establishing who was responsible for which defibrillators in the area.

He confirmed that TKCC owns the defibrillator based at the Kinlochewe Hotel and we are responsible for its maintenance. The batteries and pads need replacing and it was agreed we should pay for these using funds raised and our own funds, if necessary. We will then offer the fully functioning defibrillator to the Community Out West Trust.

MW will help to ensure that all defibrillators in the area are registered with the Scottish Ambulance Service, as it appears not all are currently on the register. It was also suggested that better signage, and awareness raising of the machine locations might be appropriate, via Visit Torridon, An Carrannach, PDF download for holiday homes etc.

Action: MW

9. Roads

TF confirmed that the consolidated roads maintenance spreadsheet had been sent to Mackenzie Sutherland at HC. HC are apparently currently working at a 35% staffing level, which is due to the lack of people employed, rather than being COVID related.

The cattle grids through Glen Torridon are continuing to deteriorate, and HC are awaiting permission from the landowners to fill these in.

TF to invite MS to look around the area.

Action: TF

It was agreed that letters from individual community members would strengthen our requests for repairs to the roads, so all are encouraged to write to the HC Road Dept. Reports of potholes, road damage etc, can be made via the following link: [Roadside Problems](#)

10. Planning Applications

No new applications as at 1 July 2020

Update – 16M Telecoms Mast – Diabaig to Craig footpath

As mentioned at a previous meeting HC has given planning permission (via permitted development) for a 16M telecoms mast and ancillary equipment to be constructed beside the Craig footpath. This is to provide telecoms coverage for the Kenmore to Fearnmore section of the coastal road on the opposite side of the loch.

The original application stated the mast would be serviced by a generator but agents acting for the contractor have recently advised that a 2.5km overhead powerline is now required. This powerline will require 25 pylons and will cut through the National Scenic Area adjacent to the Craig path. We understand that powerlines are not a permitted development within an NSA.

Alex MacInnes had advised that the planning department were undertaking a review of the original application, and CH has written to the planning officers setting out TKCC's significant concerns.

CH and CD have walked the ridge on the other side of the loch and believe there are several suitable sites which have not been considered, all outside the NSA and all within close proximity to existing power lines and the road.

Letters have also been sent to Ian Blackford, local MSPs and the HC planning department by Lord Smith. SNH, the Mountain Bothy Association and the Wester Biosphere will also be contacted.

Action: CH/CD

11. AOB

NC500 webinar - 9 July

CH has been invited to attend an NC500 webinar on 9 July. This is to discuss how NC500 can work with Community Councils to ensure communities have a level of confidence as visitors return to the region. TKCC agreed it should be emphasised that visitors need to respect the local communities by behaving responsibly – slow down! NC500 should also raise awareness that facilities are even more limited than normal - toilets, visitor centres and campsites may not be open, some businesses are not opening this year, hotels are likely to require advance booking for food and will prioritise their own guests first.

Longer term are there things the NC500 could do to make things better. For example, could they contribute to road maintenance, sustainable travel in the form of installing electric car charging points, buses for the transportation of bicycles, produce a guide book to encourage people to explore rather than charge around as fast as they can. Importantly they should also encourage people not to leave waste which is becoming a major issue along the route. CH will endeavour to raise these issues at the webinar.

Action: CH

Plans for opening public toilets

As many of public toilets and official campervan sites around the area will not be opening, there is considerable concern about whether there will be sufficient facilities for visitors and where campervan drivers will be disposing their chemical toilets. There appears to be no official map or information for campervans.

The TDCA is investigating the feasibility of hiring a disposal facility possibly for Torridon (Shieldaig may also be interested) and CS and CH both agreed to help. There will undoubtedly be environmental rules and regs to be taken into consideration, and funding would also be needed.

Action: KW/CS/CH

HighLife are currently undertaking risk assessments for the toilets at the Torridon campsite, and MW is waiting for their decision.

Local Heroes - Thank you initiative

As a Community Council we want to thank people who have been helping out the community during these difficult times. Therefore we have launched the “Local Hero” initiative inviting residents to nominate someone who they feel deserves a special mention. Every week through July and August we will send a ‘local hero’ a small token of thanks.

Date of next meeting – Wednesday 29th July.