

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom
Wednesday 4th May 2022 at 7.00pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Alpin Stewart, Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Colin Stevenson

Louise Pearson (Wester Ross Biosphere), 2 members of the public

1. Apologies

Tom Forrest, Mat Webster, Sally Cook, Cllr Alex MacInnes.

2. Minutes of meeting on 6th April 2022

Approved.

3. Matters arising from minutes on 6th April

Mowi fish farm noise – SS has collated information from local residents that he has email addresses for. Whilst some older residents said they were not troubled by noise, 11 people in Wester Alligin, Inveralligin and Torridon said they would like to sign a joint letter to complain. This letter has not yet been sent however, because in the meantime Mowi has informed residents they have now fixed the broken exhaust that they say was causing the problems.

SS has contacted Chris Ratter who is an environmental health officer at the Highland Council. He has provided SS with an app which can be used to record noise levels. Chris Ratter was concerned by the noise levels that SS sent, also that the generator runs all night.

In addition, SS reported that Donald McGregor at Rechullin had contacted the COO of Mowi. The COO appeared to be unaware of the situation and responded by saying he understood that all operations were within legal parameters. Nevertheless, in deference to the community, they are looking at battery technology. This would mean that out of hours operations would be silent, and they would only use the generator in the day to charge the batteries.

In light of the above, residents have agreed to put the matter on hold pending the outcome of Mowi's actions. All agreed this was positive news, and CH thanked SS and Donald Macgregor for their significant input.

Roads - Still no sign of the bridge reports from HC, however the road crews are currently repairing culverts and filling in potholes in Glen Torridon. They have warned the community to expect short delays.

Andrew Bone of HC hopes that the main work of top dressing along the glen will be done in overnight stints to prevent major holdups. He does not know the start date as yet but has promised to keep TKCC informed.

Regarding getting members of the community more involved with the roads situation, CH reported that there had been a rather underwhelming response so far. For example, whilst it had been agreed that some sort of social media campaign could be effective, only one person had volunteered to be involved with this. This was clearly not enough, and CH felt that if people in the community really wanted something to happen, they needed to step forward.

SW suggested that TKCC should put it out on social media that we need help. Louise Pearson also pointed out that the state of the roads was an issue everywhere in the Highlands, therefore perhaps a region wide social media campaign might attract more people. She agreed to keep us informed about what was happening in other areas, including how the Caithness campaign was getting on.

Action: SW,LP

Bin opposite Torridon Stores - AS stated he thought the bin could be significantly improved with a new wooden frame around it, and it was agreed this option should be pursued. CS reported on the timber shelter for the bin in Glen Docherty, if this had been put up by HC, perhaps they could do the same in Torridon. Louise Pearson said she would contact Connaire, who is a seasonal HC ranger, to see if he could help.

Action: AS, MW,LP

4. **Treasurer's Report**

SS is in the process of putting the annual accounts together for 2021/22. The only expenditure we have had so far this year is the renewal of our Zoom subscription (being shared with TDCA).

TKCC's own funds now stand at £1,450 plus we have £945 left over from grants. It was agreed that, if necessary, we could potentially spend some grant money on casing for the Torridon bin.

5. **Kishorn Port Visit**

Host: Mike Bauermeister, Port General Manager, Kishorn Ports Ltd (KPL)

Present: SW, TF, Jane Dick (Roads Campaign volunteer)

Purpose: Introduce TKCC and discuss issues concerning the roads

SW reported that Mike was very helpful, informative and gave a great deal of his time with a tour of the whole site. He said he was keen to have good communication with local community councils /groups and gave a presentation as follows.

KPL is a 50/50 joint venture between Ferguson Transport and Leiths Quarries Ltd. Ferguson Transport own and operate the dry dock, quays and storage and manage moorings on Loch Kishorn.

KPL's business sectors are:

Aquaculture: Fish feed distribution, storage, and handling - mostly by sea.

Decommissioning of oil and gas structures in the newly extended deep water dry dock - a growing sector as the UK exits North Sea fossil fuel extraction. Also **shipping vessel** decommissioning.

Oil and gas servicing: Preserving, maintaining, and upgrading oil and gas vessels/ structures.

Renewables: Fabrication, assembly, and manufacture of concrete base structures for wind farms off the Hebrides.

KPL also represents the interests of other businesses on site including marina and boatyard, offshore fish farm pen construction and a recirculating aquaculture system (hatchery) for Scottish Salmon Company currently under construction.

Due to the remote location and lack of housing, KPL have installed and manage on-site accommodation and services for workers aboard the vessels and structures being worked on.

Site development plan

To achieve expansion in the above sectors, the following site improvements are planned or in progress.

- Foreshore reclamation to provide a 500 metre long deep water quay
- Dry dock extension to accommodate larger vessels
- Mains electricity supply to remove current diesel generation

Transport issues

KPL submitted a transport management plan as part of their planning application. This is available on the Highland Council planning site.

KPL tries to maximise transfers by sea, and the opening of the MOWI fish feed plant in the Lochalsh area has reduced road vehicle movements. In general, traffic flow is pretty much on plan but there will be spikes caused by various on-site construction projects. Most road movements go through Lochcarron to the A890 with the exception of high/long loads which cannot negotiate the rail bridge at Balnacra.

Ferguson Transport drivers are highly trained for difficult roads with logging and large heavy vehicles, but the poorly maintained roads between the port and Kinlochewe has a very negative impact on drivers/vehicles from outside the area.

KPL would support us in making an application for an improved road with movements /tonnage data as part of a community campaign.

It should be noted that not all very heavy vehicle traffic using the roads from Kinlochewe to Kishorn is related to KPL business – other forestry/fish farm businesses in the area are using the roads with large vehicles.

6. **Community Development Plan**

The report on the results of the community survey is now available on www.tkcc.scot. Links to the report have been circulated electronically and paper copies are available on request.

CH gave a big thank you to everyone who completed the survey, also to SCDC who have put a huge amount of effort in to compiling the report.

The process of analysing the results is now underway, and the next stage is for the action group to meet and begin to convert the survey results into proposals that could potentially form part of a development plan. Once these are in a workable format, they will be put out for further consultation with the community, perhaps at an open day and/or ideas workshop.

The report on the results will be distributed as widely as possible to other stakeholders in the area, including to potential partner organisations to see if they could help with taking some of the ideas forward. Other organisations will need to be involved as TKCC will not be permitted to take a lead role.

The report will also be sent to our new Highland Councillors, and relevant public bodies, including the Highland Community Planning Partnership (comprising Highland Council, NHS Highland, Police Scotland, Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, NatureScot and others).

Action: CH, MW

AS agreed to send the results to the Communities Housing Trust whose questions formed part of the survey.

Action AS

7. **Correspondence Received**

Email from Cory Jones, Chair, Gairloch Community Council proposing that TKCC, Gairloch, Aultbea and Wester Ewe Community Councils send a joint letter to HC to express our dismay at the state of our roads and complain about HC's lack of action.

It was agreed that in principle a combined approach was a good idea, however, our issues were not necessarily all the same as Gairloch CC's. It was felt we should be seeking to build positive relationships with the new Highland Councillors, therefore now was not the time to send a lengthy complaint letter. SW to respond accordingly.

Action: SW

Roads Campaign Letters/Emails. CH reported that she was aware of a few people who had written letters to MSPs etc following TKCC circulating drafts. Again, it was agreed we should wait to see how things go with the new Highland Councillors and any social media campaign before planning our next steps.

8. Planning Applications

None.

NB. Subsequent to the meeting, members were notified of the following and made no comments: *Erection of house, Malt Croft, Kinlochewe, Achnasheen IV22 2PA*
Ref. No: 22/01820/FUL

9. Any Other Competent Business

Suggestions for future guest speakers at TKCC meetings would be very welcome.

10. Dates of next meetings

The AGM will be held at 7pm on 15 June 2022 in Torridon Community Centre. This will be followed by an ordinary meeting (replacing the meeting originally scheduled for 1 June). Refreshments will be served.

Further dates are:

Wednesday 13th July

Wednesday 7th September

Wednesday 5th October