

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC)
Meeting held by Zoom at 7pm
Wednesday 24th July 2024

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Alpin Stewart, Maud McIntyre, Jackie Todd.

4 members of the public.

Apologies: Colin Stevenson, Tom Forrest, Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Councillor Chris Birt.

Before the meeting started, CH expressed TKCC's great sadness at the recent death of Murdo MacDonald. A long-time resident of Kinlochewe, Murdo was a greatly valued member of the community.

1. Minutes of meeting on 19th June 2024

Approved, subject to correction of a typo in Matters Arising, *Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023* should read 31 March 2024.

2. Matters arising from meeting on 19th June 2024

Roads – SW is liaising with TF to produce a revised and updated list of priority items. Outstanding items from the original list are the repair to the damaged parapet on the Alligin bridge and blocked drains in Fasaig. Cllr Birt has reminded the roads team about the bridge repair, however the person responsible for bridges has recently retired, and his replacement has not yet been appointed, resulting in delay to progress.

New items are dangerous holes in the centre line of the A832 at the top of the hill above Glen Docherty viewpoint as raised by CS, a sinking area of road near Cromasaig croft on the A896, plus various pot holes and severely broken edges along the A896. SW has asked TF & CS to help provide photos and specific locations.

Action: TF/CS/SW

SW sent photos to Liz Kraft of some very dangerous potholes on a corner of the A896 glen road between Glen Cottage and the NTS carpark. Within a few days a rough repair was made that at least will prevent punctures.

There have also been repairs and resurfacing work to sections of the C1083 between Diabaig and the Bealach na Gaoithe. Unfortunately, no notice of the works was given to TKCC or the community which caused intermittent delays on the single track road to residents, visitors and delivery vehicles. SW will contact HC roads team management to express our gratitude that the works are being done but also ask if they can tell TKCC ahead in future so we can warn the community.

Action: SW

Torridon Village sign – SW has received confirmation that the road sign will be remade, and will monitor progress.

Scottish Fire & Rescue – SW sent a reminder for the leaflets and has been told they will be available after 1st August.

Action: SW

Local Place Plan – Drop in events to obtain community feedback took place as scheduled at Kinlochewe Village Hall and Torridon Community Centre. CH thanked all involved in making these

happen. Some very useful ideas and comments on the plan were contributed and these will now be incorporated into the final version.

No comments have been received from neighbouring community councils or from Highland Councillors. Katie Anderson (Development Officer) reported that the final draft plan should be ready by late August.

Shared Rural Network (SRN) – A meeting with a senior leader at Building Digital UK, the government agency responsible for the SRN programme has been arranged. SW, CH and Chris Johnson of TDCA will attend.
Action: CH/SW

John Muir Trust - Shortly before the meeting, CH had received an email from JMT stating that members of the ‘coalition of concern’ had heard that the UK Government is considering whether the SRN programme should be dropped. In light of this, JMT has prepared a letter to the new ministers, Rt Hon. Peter Kyle MP and Sir Chris Bryant MP, calling for a pause and a review of priorities in the Total Not Spot part of the programme. They would like community organisations, landowners and others to sign. CH will circulate a copy to TKCC members.

Action: CH

West Ross Deer Management Group – TF attended the group’s AGM. Update to be provided at the next TKCC meeting.
Action: TF

3. Treasurer’s report

No payments/receipts since last month, current bank account balance remains £1,569.86.

4. Highland Council

TKCC recently received notifications from HC regarding several different consultations and had hoped that Cllr Birt could give some background, but he was unable to attend this meeting. MM and JT had looked at the consultations instead and reported as follows:

- Local Living tool consultation - a concept promoted by Scottish Government that aims to provide people with the opportunity to meet the majority of their daily needs within a reasonable distance of their home. MM reported that it uses a mapping tool to plot facilities within a settlement such as primary schools, shops, post offices, public transport, GP surgeries, places of worship, allotments, art galleries etc, and these are then rated on how accessible they are within a 10 minute walk of the home. The Highland Development Team has developed the online tool to help assess how well Highland places meet the principles of local living.

This consultation is being run alongside the Highland Place Standard Survey consultation which is gathering feedback on people’s lived experiences of Highland and what makes for a good place to live, work, play and visit. The consultations are complementary to each other and will help to inform the evidence base for the new Highland Local Development Plan (HLDP).
Deadline for both consultations is 16th August 2024.

MM to submit on behalf of TKCC.

Action: MM

- Ecology strategy consultation – a 12 week public consultation on Highland Council’s inaugural Ecology Strategy - a set of actions to tackle biodiversity loss and address the ecological emergency. Draft of the strategy is available on HC consultation portal. Deadline 30th September. JT to complete on behalf of TKCC.

Action: JT

- Masterplan Consent Areas Statement. MM explained that this HC report covers the Scottish Government's proposed introduction of discretionary powers to establish Masterplan Consent Areas (MCAs) under new planning legislation. MCAs are seen as a tool to positively influence and accelerate the unlocking of key sites for strategic opportunities. They are intended to better co-ordinate and expedite development, transport, design and built environment issues in defined areas. If adopted, an MCA would set clear parameters, conditions and principles for development that – if met- would remove the need for planning permissions, road construction consent and potentially other consents. MCAs can be operative for no more than 10 years.

No types of development are excluded but certain designations are, and MCAs cannot be established within National Scenic Areas, and international and national nature conservation areas. MM felt that MCAs are unlikely to affect the TKCC area, and are more relevant to proposals for the Cromarty Free Port development, for example.

- Land Management Plan – this is proposed to bring together information and maps/plans on how land is managed, with land policies determined in Local Place Plans. MM was unable to find out more about this and further information is to be requested from Cllr Birt.

Action: SW/CB

5. Correspondence received

- Highland Council – 20mph programme review
The current 20mph speed limit roll out across Highland was delivered using a Temporary Road Traffic Regulation Order which is valid for a period of 18 months until 31 January 2025. Following a review, HC is recommending that most of these limits remain in place, including in Torridon and Kinlochewe, and progress to a formal permanent Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

TKCC members were very pleased.

- Scotland's International Development Alliance
SIDA is undertaking a Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) survey and is keen to obtain community councils' input. This is to help it assess the implementation of the SDG agenda in Scotland, contributing to global sustainable development efforts. MM agreed to complete the survey on behalf of TKCC.
Action: MM
- Mat Webster, TDCA – quote for bin store in Fasaig
Mat has obtained a quote for TKCC to install a store that could accommodate 3 bins. This would allow for recycling to be introduced, similar to the system and size of bins that residents have. It will not include glass recycling. The quote is £800 including materials and labour and it was agreed we should investigate whether funding from the Ward Fund could be obtained to help cover the cost. SW to liaise with Katie Anderson to investigate.

Action: SW

6. Planning Applications

- 24/02266/FUL - Land 220M NE Of Heights Cottage Incheril Kinlochewe
Installation of a 20m high lattice tower and ancillary development

This is the first planning application for an SRN mast in the TKCC area since the Coire Mhic Nobuil site application (subsequently withdrawn) last year. TKCC has submitted a lengthy objection, including that, contrary to public policy, there has been zero consultation with the

community and any public benefit from the proposal would appear to be substantially outweighed by the harm that it will cause.

The proposed mast is on the Heights of Kinlochewe estate and some members had asked for the landowner's views. CH confirmed that she is in contact with the estate's land agent, as well as with all the other landowners in the TKCC area who have masts proposed on their estates.

All except Beinn Damph estate have expressed opposition to the proposals, although they would reconsider if the community was in favour of them. CH last spoke to Beinn Damph estate a long time ago, at that point they said they had not formed a view.

CH noted that the Planning Department at HC is extremely behind with dealing with planning applications. The Head of Planning has informed us that even if the submission date for comments on any planning application has expired, HC will continue to accept comments or responses, including from TKCC and members of the public, right up to the date of their decision.

- *24/0818/FUL - Land 220M NE Of Heights Cottage Incheril Kinlochewe*
Installation of 35m lattice mast with 3no. shared antennas, 3no. dish antennas, associated cabinets and ancillary apparatus within a fenced compound and all other associated ancillary apparatus

This is for another proposed SRN mast at Heights of Kinlochewe, this time on the hill above the ruined settlement of Leckie. Again, it appears to be going to provide negligible benefit (if any) to the community and the risk of harm to the environment appears substantial. CH will prepare another objection.

Action: CH

- *24/01966/FUL - Land 200M West Of Slattadale House Slattadale Loch Maree*
Reinstate forestry track, with widening of access and formation of turning area, stacking area and passing place

MM noted some potential health and safety issues associated with replanting trees post felling. Whilst this would not form an objection to the application, MM to liaise with CH on the possibility of submitting a comment in this regard.

- *Pre-consultation request – WHP Telecoms – proposed upgrade to Existing Base Station Installation at (CS11173829) 200m uphill from Forest Road, Southeast of A896, Kinlochewe, Coulin, Achnasheen IV22 2ES (E210360 & N858260)*

As this mast serves a useful purpose in providing coverage for the glen road and the proposal would not involve any significant change, TKCC members agreed they had no comments.

7. Any other business

CH asked TKCC members for their thoughts on whether TKCC should have a formal protocol in relation to local funerals.

The background to this was that, late the previous evening, TF had asked for our Zoom meeting to be postponed because of Murdo MacDonald's funeral taking place earlier in the day. Other TKCC members did not respond, however CH discussed the issue with AS and SW in the morning, and they all felt the meeting should go ahead, partly because it would be very late notice to postpone.

Following this, TF had interrupted the meeting halfway through to state he did not think we should be having the meeting as he felt it was disrespectful. Also that, in his experience of TKCC, in person meetings and functions have been cancelled or postponed when there has been a local death or funeral on the same day. TF followed this up with an email in the same terms.

TKCC members unanimously agreed that they meant no disrespect at all to Murdo by holding our online meeting (MM and CS had attended the funeral). They also felt it a shame that TF had not stayed at the meeting to discuss.

After some discussion, it was agreed a distinction could be drawn between an online meeting and an in person meeting taking place after a funeral at the same venue. It was also agreed that no hard and fast rules could be made, we need to consider each case separately, and all TKCC members must keep each other informed on a timely basis so that appropriate decisions can be made.

Date of next meeting:

Wednesday 18th September – 7.00pm

In person at Kinlochewe Village Hall

Future dates to be published shortly.