

Minutes (draft) of Torridon and Kinlochewe Community Council (TKCC) Meeting held by Zoom on Wednesday, 2 February 2022 at 7.30pm

Present: Caroline Hamilton (Chair), Sue Whiting (Secretary), Colin Stevenson, Tom Forrest, Steve Schnabel (Treasurer), Mat Webster, Cllr. Alex MacInnes

8 members of the public.

1. Apologies

Sally Cook.

2. Minutes of meeting on 8 December 2021

Approved.

3. Matters arising from minutes of 8 December

NatureScot – Loch Maree islands – Doug Bartholomew of NatureScot has agreed to attend a future TKCC meeting once their draft code of conduct has been finalised.

Slattadale Forest Plan – On hold awaiting clarification.

BT R-100 scheme – AM reported that two new people have been appointed to lead on this: Allan Gunn, HC ECO Transformation, Communities & Places - Allan.Gunn@highland.gov.uk
Andrea Rutherford, Head of Policy, Digital Highlands and Islands - andrea.rutherford@hient.co.uk

Dates and times of next meetings – details for meetings up until May 2022 have been circulated and are available on the TKCC website.

4. Treasurer's report

TKCC's own funds stand at £1,572. There is still £244 allocated for use by the Community Garden fund plus £245 allocated for redecorating Torridon Toilets, and it is expected this will be spent soon.

5. Community development plan survey update

MW reported that the survey had now closed, and prize draw winners notified. The organisers are very pleased with the response rate, with a total of 162 responses received. This represents approx. 40% of people in the area.

CH commented it is intended to have a targeted collaboration with village specific areas. Marie Leslie from GALE in Gairloch was attending the meeting as a public member and was asked to give an outline of the role of GALE, which covers the area from Kinlochewe to Laide, Gairloch, and its proposed action plan for that area. Maria stated they intend to use Planning for Real to collate ideas and help people in the community come up with their own implementation plans and forward planning. Maria acts as a conduit for local residents to participate in the process.

CH suggested it would be beneficial for GALE to wait for the results of the Torridon & Kinlochewe Community Development Plan survey to be available before launching the Planning for Real process in Kinlochewe.

6. Roads

CH reported that TKCC was not invited to the Ward 5 business meeting in January despite AM's assurance that we would be. However, TKCC has now been invited to the Ward 5 business meeting on Wednesday 9th February at which we will put questions to the Ward 5 Councillors and the HC roads team

Action CH, SW, TF

Tom Forrest has prepared an extensive and detailed report of the many unresolved problems with our roads and the chronic, unacceptable state of them. This includes photographs and details of the increased usage by enormous 200-ton transport trucks that it is believed are servicing Lochcarron and Kishorn docks. TF's report has been circulated to all Ward Councillors and Dot Ferguson ahead of the Ward 5 meeting.

AM explained he received the full road work plan on 18th Jan from Ian Moncrieff (Roads Manager) and that this will be made available to TKCC prior to the meeting along with the A Road Capital plan.

He stated the A Road Capital plan has already been approved. This includes patching and repair prior to surface dressing to a 5km part of the Torridon to Kinlochewe road, and repairs to a section of the hill road outside Torridon Hotel. At a later date there will be a revenue plan for routine repairs to the road.

AM acknowledged the capital road plan does not cover all the Torridon to Kinlochewe road as there are inadequate funds available to do all the work.

TKCC members voiced their dismay that the proposed works fall woefully short of what is urgently needed. They also asked why nothing is being done about the Torridon to Diabaig road that is now in an appalling state, especially in the section from Torridon House to the Coire mic Nobuil bridge.

CS asked AM about other funding options for the roads now that there are no EU funds. AM explained that Malcolm McLeod is Executive officer of the Redesign Board. This committee headed by Colin Howell is exploring funding options.

Lilah Ford asked about the long overdue measures that are needed to deal with vehicles speeding through Kinlochewe. CH assured her that these form part of TF's report.

The discussion concluded that whilst the proposed work on only 5km of the rapidly crumbling A896 is better than nothing, it is completely inadequate. A structured plan for bringing it up to standard must come from HC and the Roads department.

CH challenged AM that there was very little engagement from any of the other Ward 5 councillors on this very urgent matter. AM stated it was hoped the other Ward 5 councillors would attend TKCC meetings going forward.

AM was asked to provide (a) the copy of the current workplan for roads in Ward 5 and (b) the list of priorities (compiled by HC's Colin Howell following his road and bridge survey),

both of which he had promised at the TKCC meeting on 8 December. He agreed to send these after the meeting.

Action: AM

7. Core paths – maintenance funding

TF reported that through the Local Access Forum and Councillors Discretionary Funds, HC have allocated a total of £7500 to clear out and make good two core paths in our area, one from Coulin Estate to Kinlochewe, the other between Rechullin and Torridon House. Discreet signage will be in place to waymark them. Works should begin in early Spring or when weather permits.

8. Correspondence received

Diabaig – blether bench

A resident of Diabaig has asked when the blether bench in Diabaig will be installed. CH reported that the bench is in safe storage and waiting for local residents to be consulted on their preferred site.

NTS – Torridon Gateway

NTS propose to replace their old Visitor Centre building at the entrance to Fasaig and have invited CH as a representative of TKCC onto the panel of 6 to choose the architect. The rest of the panel comprises NTS people, including the CEO. 34 architect firms have expressed interest and these need to be made into a shortlist. A meeting to do this will be held shortly.

NTS are keen to hear from the community about the design and use of the building to be known as Torridon Gateway. MW noted that results from the Community Survey should be useful in this regard and that aspects to consider include how the new building fits in with the campsite and junction. Other members noted the tremendous opportunity for the building to be striking/beautiful/eco and to promote the area, and that it should be a gateway to lead visitors into the village. All agreed it should not draw them away from the shop/Community Centre.

Action: CH

HC Community Support Co-ordinator

Julie Wileman has taken over from Lynn Frost. It was agreed she should be invited to a future TKCC meeting to explain her role.

Action: SW

Mowi – fish farm noise report

A condition of Mowi's recent planning consent for the fish farm opposite Wester Alligin was that they should conduct a noise assessment. TKCC has now received Mowi's report and circulated it to residents who had previously been in contact with us about the noise. The report states that the noise mitigation measures Mowi has put in place have been effective. However, they still need to assess the noise from vessels servicing the farm. For Covid reasons and because the farm was fallow for most of 2021, Mowi has not yet done this but expects to do so in the Spring.

9. Planning applications

Planning pre-consultation enquiry – 4G telecoms mast on A832.

CH has spoken to the consultant responsible for the application and she has confirmed that the proposed site is to the west of the A832 by Loch Maree. Having looked at the grid reference - E: 190478, N: 870569 – TF’s view is that the site between the Loch Maree Hotel and Victoria Falls should not be unduly intrusive.

21/05613/PNO – Erection of two polytunnels, Cromasaig 9, Kinlochewe

No comments.

22/00136/FUL – Erection of outbuilding for use as home office, Grace Cottage, 7 Diabaig

No comments.

10. Any Other Competent Business

Suggestions for future guest speakers at TKCC meetings would be very welcome, both from TKCC members and members of the public.

TKCC currently makes its Zoom subscription available to the TDCA. CH thanked the TDCA very much for its offer to pay for half of this going forward.